

SONGS  
AND  
OTHER FANCIES



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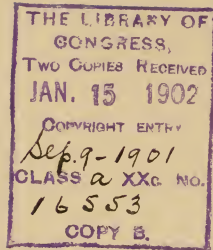
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HENRY D. MUIR

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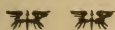
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# SONGS

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*Dying notes, and notes half heard  
Through the forest glooms and lights—  
Echoes of a passing bird,  
Singing as his heart invites—  
They but make a moment ring,  
Though he faint with melody;  
Love, these simple songs I sing,  
Live and die for thee.*

*New songs for the newest spring  
Leap from many eager throats;  
'Mid the joyous heralding  
Steal unheard these dying notes—  
Notes that live and die for thee,  
Telling what the heart indites,  
Ebbing faint and fadingly  
Through the glooms and lights.*





## ADVENTURE

Come, my soul, no farther grope  
Through this land Indifference,  
Straining thus thy fragile sense  
For the signal lights of hope.

But come: away!

O, brave, my soul, and free,  
Be pinioned strong to act, to dare—  
To mount the heavens of ecstasy,  
To droop in hell-pits of despair.

Come away!

Here the musing Stoics sit,  
Heedful nor of sun nor rain,  
Gleaning naught of joy or pain,  
As the shadow-moments flit.

But thou, away!

But thou, my soul, be free!  
O, 'scaping soon this stirless air,  
We'll sweep the heavens of ecstasy,  
Or sink to hell-pits of despair.

Come away!

## AN APPEAL

Now ice doth break on stream and lake,  
And Spring's but gently sleeping,  
'Neath snows so light and thin and white  
That half her charms are peeping.  
Why then so still, O heart, and chill,  
When joy shouldst fill thee, heaping?

The sun's great love doth melt and move :  
See ! at his nod approving,  
Ev'n ice and snow do leap and glow  
And o'er the earth go roving.  
My sun art thou ; but shine, and, lo !  
I, too, will glow with loving.

## THE AWAKENING

Now, while Winter wanes away,  
    Comes a day,  
Sweet and glorious and free,—  
    Comes to me!—  
And around my soul I fold it;  
Close unto my breast I hold it,  
Till my singing heart hath told it  
    Dreams of melody.

For to-day my heart can sing  
    Songs that ring  
Musically light, and warm  
    With the charm  
Of loosed river freely streaming,  
Of green meadows newly teeming,  
Of a forest palely dreaming  
    Of some spent alarm.

Joy of many, many things  
    Leaps and sings  
In the heart's sweet wakening;  
    But must sing  
As the singing thrushes—higher  
Than may thought or word aspire;  
Free, with that unlessoned choir,  
    At the feet of Spring.

## THE MORROW

Because rough winds had bitten  
The trees with teeth of hail;  
Because Winter had smitten  
Drear field and forest pale;  
Because the sun had shrouded  
His face, and skies were clouded,  
I falsely said,—“Lo, Spring is dead;  
Spring is dead.”

Because my heart was searèd  
By fires and frosts of years;  
Because my soul had wearied  
Of fruitless hopes and fears;  
Because no dreams came nightly,  
On light wings flying lightly,  
I falsely said,—“Lo, Love is dead;  
Love is dead.”

For on the very morrow  
Came Spring through field and grove,  
And, through the mist of sorrow,  
Gleamed the near eyes of Love;  
And voices fell, reproving,  
But tender still with loving,—  
“’Twas falsely said; we are not dead:  
No; not dead.”

## IN SILENCE

Not by smile or glance or gesture  
Was love's blessed presence shown,  
Not by sweep of curl or vesture,  
Not by voice of melting tone:  
By a light more swift than glances,  
By a sign more chaste and lone  
Than in dream of purest fancies  
Was that blessed presence known.

Silence held and gyved and bound us,  
Gyved and bound us all around,  
Vainly seeking to confound us  
In a maze of gloom profound.  
But that very silence brought us  
To the fane where love is crowned;  
And Love's self, in silence, taught us  
Without glance or touch or sound.

### A NOTE OF APRIL

Love, the birds are singing low,  
On brown-budded branches swinging;  
And my heart, my heart, also,  
Is a note of April, winging  
With the notes of their sweet singing,  
All aglow  
For the life and joy of spring.

And no surer do I know,—  
Love, thou dearest in Love's keeping!—  
That the velvet buds will show  
Their green hearts than thy heart, leaping  
From its cave for winter sleeping,  
Soon will flow  
With mine in this gleam of spring.

## THE LURE

Thoughts that would be spoken,  
Thoughts that should be broken  
For some fantastic token  
    Of melody and song,—  
How they leap and tremble,  
Fade and reassemble,  
Writhe in and out and whirl about—  
    A most unruly throng!

Quick they are and clever,  
Baffling each endeavor;  
No strategy can sever  
    Fair number from their files:  
Lures that should allure them,  
Chains that should secure them,  
All, all are vain; from lure and chain  
    They glide with taunting smiles.

Only when I whisper  
Name than cresses crisper  
Comes every tiny lisper  
    Of light melodic sound:  
Threats cannot compel them,  
And charms will not spell them;  
But at thy name, subdued and tame,  
    They cluster thick around.



## CHIVALRY

Sweetly, sweetly, birds awoke me  
From the blank of night;  
And I let the music stroke me  
As it might,  
Till my thoughts were silken light.

Then I sent one thought a-flying  
Over wood and moor,  
Where a prisoned heart was lying,  
Most secure,  
In a prison marble-pure.

It should sing: "One cometh hither,  
To thy rescuing;  
And these bars, as rush, shall wither  
And the swing  
Of his sword tame everything."

Softly, softly, birds around me  
Hush their song a space,  
And I know my squire hath found thee,  
Face to face.  
Courage! I must ride apace.

## PERFUMES

These perfumes of night,  
    Dear, that fill us and thrill us  
With aërial might,  
    They would slay, they would kill us;  
Ay, kill us; and fill us,  
    Till, vase-like, we hold  
Soft spices of night—  
    White, silent and cold.

Love's breath, it alone,  
    Dear, shall still us or thrill us;  
Love's perfumes or none,  
    Dear, revive us or kill us;  
But night that would still us,  
    O, night need not guess  
'Tis Love's breath alone,  
    Dear, his, that we bless!

## I DREAMED

I dreamed, and thine eyes were clearer  
Than aught on earth that's clear;  
I dreamed, and thy voice was dearer  
Than music,—music dear!  
And thy face knew a light sincerer  
Than light of thy days, and nearer  
Thy soul than thought seemed near.

So now, as in truth I hold thee,  
O life that is, not seems!  
Now, while these arms enfold thee;  
Now, let shadows and gleams  
Dark thee with sin-clouds or gold thee  
With glow of heaven,—I'll behold thee  
Still through the eyes of dreams.

## IN THE ORCHARD

For these curling flakes, down shaken,  
O, so gently, o'er thy hair,  
Could love's sweetest blooms be taken,  
And my heart the boughs repair,—  
Then the blossoms of this playtime  
Of the clean and budding year  
Would not perish with the Maytime,  
But forever shower thee, dear!

Shower thee ever, ay, forever,  
With exhaustless pink and white;  
And the boughs be barren never  
Of some new and rare delight.  
Love enchanting, frosts that harden  
Fail, nor any sun doth sear:  
In the soul's immortal garden  
Burst the buds forever, dear!

## MUSICIANS

Beethoven's divinity,  
Mozart's free serenity,  
And, for happy trinity,  
    Schubert's lyric song:  
These I deemed enough for me,  
These musicians three,  
    For life long.

Fool! I knew no rune of love,  
Nor the jealous croon of love:  
Standing in the June of love,  
    Now you sing and play.  
Heedless I of minstrel three;  
But one song for me,  
    All the day.

## RIVER-SONGS

From my dripping oars  
    Music pours—  
Each light-splashing drop's a note divine :  
    'Tis the sweet prelude,  
    Yet how seeming rude,  
'Gainst this sweeter swelling strain of thine.

For you sing, you sing—  
    You that bring  
All life's gladness, all life's madness, to my heart.  
    Ah, no lullèd king  
    Hath such soul-soothing,  
For all the soother's skill and minstrel art!

The flushed Evening  
    Hears thee sing,  
And folds back the shadows that would fall :  
    Now she leans so low  
    That the waters glow  
And the gold blush of heaven suffuses all.

Thus, my dear, my dear,  
    Singing clear,  
We shall drift through half the dreamy night.  
    To our souls belongs  
    Song, and only songs  
Shall guide, shall steer, shall lull us with delight.

## TRANSFORMATION

The rodded gold you trailed astern,  
While singing soft your song of love,  
O, 'twas as coarse as random weed;  
But lifted,—how the diamonds burn  
Down avenues of flame, and prove  
That 'tis a flower of fairy breed!

My flower of days as coarse did seem  
As rugged weed, ill-sown and wild,  
Abandoned in the thistled way;  
But it was splashed beneath a stream  
Of Love's sweet water undefiled;  
It gleams divine with pendant spray.



## THE DIVE

My course is as silent and green  
As hermit could wish;  
And here is a palace serene,—  
The servitors; fish;  
And here, the bright nymph of the stream,  
And maids, in a ring:  
O, here, I will linger, and dream,  
And sway as a king!

My heart that is heavy with love,  
And sick with love's care,  
Will shake from the fetters thereof,  
Be free of the snare;  
Will drowse as the heart of a child  
That knoweth but sleep:  
My life, be it bitter or mild,  
Shall over me sweep.

But, love, the far light of thine eye  
Doth follow me here.  
What! am I a serf that must fly,  
And kneel, and revere?  
For my heart doth mount on the gleam;  
'Tis fettered anew;  
'Tis borne to the crest of the stream,  
To life, and to you.

## MESSAGES

Messages the winds are writing  
On the surface of the bay ;  
Messages in white, delighting  
With fair lines of foam and spray,  
Which are blotted quick away,  
Or transposed—  
Subtle messages are they,  
Half-disclosed.

Only lovers' eyes can read them ;  
Only your dear eyes and mine,  
From the tossing skiff, do heed them  
And the liquid words define,  
Reading clear their every line ;  
For our hearts  
Bear the indelible divine  
Counterparts.

## PANTHEISM

Tell my heart and creed, love?

Nay, ask the birds that sing;

Ask the bees that wing

Among sweet flowers;

Ask the leaf that shakes;

Ask the gleaming lakes;

Ask the air that makes

This happy clime of ours.

For their creed is mine, love—

The creed of light and joy,

For hours that not destroy

Themselves in gloom;

The creed of sun and air,

And all that showeth fair;

A creed of joy, to share,

To share, dear heart, with—whom?

## IN ARABIA

Strode a genie through the palace  
That fair dream had wrought,  
And his eyes were hot with malice;  
But I thought  
Of a worded talisman  
In my garb Arabian.

Then his look was cooled to pleasure,  
And he knelt, my slave:  
"Ask and take of me that treasure  
Thou dost crave."  
But I hid my talisman,  
And dissolved the charm began.

For I saw a light more splendid  
Than from magics wove—  
Love, thine eyes were on me bended,  
And their love  
Through my soul so richly ran,  
Shamed, I hid the talisman.

## OUR WORLD

What doth the cankerous world to-day?

O, love, what doth it say?

Are mad hearts striving still and sad hearts sighing?

Nay, love, thou dost not care;

So this our world be fair,

These sweetly-crested hours before us flying.

For this our golden world we'll plan

On plan Sicilian;

Ay, Theocritus, he, shall lute us numbers;

And gentle Bion, too,

And Moschus, friend, and true,

And many a singer new that mutely slumbers.

Wax-girted pipes, perchance, they'll play

For us, and we will pay

With wines Petelean the high endeavor;

And these our crested hours,

With anise crowned and flowers,

Will break the wreaths for showers and chaplets sever.

So, love, what cares our world to-day

What the mad world doth say;

So that its hearts be light for kindly swaying;

So that the ways be sweet

And soft unto its feet,

The winging pleasures fleet and not delaying.

## DURVA

Oft the holy Hindoo prayed :

“*Durvà, Durvà*, sacred grass !

Into my existence pass

All thy hundred roots, and braid

All thy hundred stems divine

With this life of mine.

“Then,”—the holy Hindoo said,—

“*Durvà, Durvà*, green and fresh !

Will a hundred sins of flesh

From my soul be sunderèd,

And a hundred years prolong

Life, and virtues throng.”

Love, no holy Hindoo craves,

Now, a hundred years of bliss ;

But two lips profane would kiss

Thine, and be your rubied slaves.

What’s a hundred years to this—

Love’s immortal kiss !

## THREADS

Love no idle shadow is,  
Shifting with the sun;  
But of surest substances  
Love is wove and spun.  
Where life's tapestries outspread  
Endless threads are wove—  
Strongest, brightest, is the thread  
Love.

Let the grim Eumenides  
Shear and cut and maim,  
Tearing from the tapestries  
Health, or wealth, or fame:  
They can shear, unhinderèd,  
Every thread thereof,  
Save that brightest golden thread—  
Love.

All the rest as shadows are,  
Love's the substance true;  
Gleaming hope, though every star  
Fail of hope and hue.  
Truth, at crystal fountain-head,  
Beauty, in her grove,  
Ever spin the golden thread—  
Love.



## AT FLIGHT

How can my heart be heedful,  
    Loving thee so!  
How can my heart be greedful  
    Of what on earth may show;  
Having such heaven above me,  
Having scope to love thee!  
Ah, can my heart be heedful,—  
    Loving thee so!

But what man deemeth needful  
    'Neath foot I throw,  
And with wide wings and speedful  
    I move from high to low;  
And from that low to highest,  
Even as thou fliest:  
How can my heart be heedful,—  
    Loving thee so!

## SLANDER

Eros, our god, is spiteful;  
Eros hath jealous grown  
Of these our days delightful;  
He'd change our hearts to stone.  
For last night through my dreaming  
He glanced on wings of joy,  
And his arch face was beaming—  
So I addressed the boy:

"To gentlest knight Tibullus  
Was Delia untrue,  
Nor found the sweet Catullus  
A love of constant hue;  
But, Love, my love is truthful,  
And, Love, her heart is strong;  
For see! our days are soothful  
With balm and sun and song.

"And, Love, with thee I'd wager  
My wealth, my life, my soul,  
That truer heart nor sager  
Doth beat 'twixt pole and pole."  
Showed he no face of mercy,  
But, with bored gesture, fled.  
"A woman false as Circe—  
Poor, doting fool!" he said.

## THE DROWSING GODS

Let the mild Apsarasas,  
Heavenly nymphs, refrain to pass  
Through these common fields of grass,  
And the gods of light that are—  
Indra, rest in glowing star;  
Mithra, Surya, Savitar,  
    Drowse within the sun,—  
    Dearest one!

Find we not divinities  
Of a stronger grace than these  
Where our own and native trees  
Spread, and where the homely breeds  
Of flowers startle not the meads?  
Pity we their languid needs,  
    Love, and sing for them  
    Requiem!

### A MADRIGAL

O the sky, how blue it is!  
O thy love, how true it is!  
O the earth, how fair it is!  
O our life, how rare it is!

And though Time reaps all of them,  
Now we'll heed the call of them,  
Mid the heart's delicious strife—  
Nature, Love, and Life.

## JOY O' THE FIELDS

O, and what were the joy o' the fields—  
The bird-notes loose and free,  
The perfumes light and the flowers bright,  
To hear, and to breathe, and to see,—  
If thou shared not with me, my love,  
If thou shared not with me!

But thou stand'st clear i' the golden warmth,  
And hear, and breathe, and see;  
And the world's complete, and life's as sweet  
As the life of the roving bee:  
For thou shar'st all with me, my love,  
O, thou shar'st all with me!

## RIVALS

I'd sing thee a song, but alas!  
The trees and the flowers and the grass  
Sing, and the echoless stream  
Sings, and the blue skies, in dream,  
Sing,—ay, and all that is silent doth teem  
    With song, when I'd sing.

So that, when I open my lips,  
Their songs, love, my pale songs eclipse  
And all my heart-flow make dumb  
To thee; no melodies come  
To thee—the hive of their birth is their tomb  
    Ere spread they a wing.

## THE BRIDE

To Titania, queen,  
    I will send for a veil  
Of rich bridal sheen,  
And to Oberon, king,  
I will kneel for a ring,  
And the elvish Puck hail  
    For minstrels, to sing  
    And soothly to play,  
And for dancers to dance  
On our fair wedding day.

For my bride must be seen  
    In no filmier veil  
Than true fairy sheen,  
And no shaped metal cling  
To her hand, but a ring  
Forged 'neath the moon and pale;  
    And heart it must spring  
    To song with the fay,  
Nor a grosser wing glance  
Through the glad wedding day.



## REST

Sweet, the drowsy-natured June  
O'er and o'er one word doth croon  
Through the noon, and after noon,—  
    "Rest."

And it fills the daisy's ear,  
And the gentle grasses hear—  
Petal, leaf, and fairy spear  
    Rest.

We have felt the cold and heat,  
We have moved to restless beat;  
Now we too, we too, my sweet,  
    Rest.

## BOBOLINK

Not thy song's sweet clarity,  
Though as light and clear,  
Bobolink,  
O'er the earth it flows  
As freshet from pure snows—  
No; 'tis thy sincerity  
Makes thee dear to heart and ear,  
Bobolink.

For through pale humanity  
Runs swart threads of gloom,  
Bobolink,  
And our freest songs  
Still are bound in thongs  
Of thick-woven vanity—  
Woven doom of fateful loom,  
Bobolink!

But the notes you sing to us,  
So jocund and free,  
Bobolink,  
Lacking vanities,  
Bring us sweet heartsease,  
And stray hopes that cling to us,—  
Ay, till we could sing with thee,  
Bobolink!

## A SHADOW

In this grove of many fountains  
May that faith that moveth mountains  
Move a shadow, fleecy-light,  
Yet of power to chill and blight.

For but late, alone and dreaming,  
By these waters, splashing, gleaming,  
Love, I saw, too true, thy face  
Gleam from veil of foamy lace.

And the eyes that now do glitter  
With warm light,—O, they were bitter  
As sad eyes that ne'er had told  
Love's held rosary of gold.

Ah! is love but as a curtain,  
Hiding depths unknown, uncertain,  
To the very heart? a gleam  
Of bright foam above the stream?

In this grove of leaping fountains  
May that faith that moveth mountains  
Lift a shadow, fleecy-light,  
That would chill and dark and blight!

## THE SONGS I SANG

The songs I sang for you, love,  
    Were warm and bright and free;  
And wings they had, and, swift and glad,  
    They flew 'twixt you and me.  
Through glad, swift days of pleasure,  
    Through nights that knew no pang,  
So lightly flew, from me to you,  
    The songs I sang.

The songs I sing to-day, love,  
    Are poor and sad, I know;  
Bearing the weight of time and fate,  
    How pale they are and slow!  
From proud red gates of passion,  
    No more like birds they wing;  
Yet creep as true, from me to you,  
    The songs I sing.

## TANGLES

Blows this scented breeze as free  
As the breezes of the sea,  
But it cannot blow away  
Circling thought as down or spray.

Flowers and grasses are caressed  
Into soft and careless rest:  
O, that 'twere thy charge, good wind,  
So to cradle heart and mind!

But no touch or twirl of thine  
Can unknot the fated twine—  
Ah, these tangles must remain  
Long in soul and heart and brain!

## NO ANCHORAGE

So long my mind had been at sea,  
That, when a port was neared,  
I saw no harborage for me,  
And to the main I veered;  
And scudded fast through froth of crest,  
And o'er wide trough of seas,  
And found more rest in stormy test  
Than in snug shelteries.

The light flares redly from the mole,  
But 'neath its gleaming line,  
I know the bay too bound and shoal  
For such a ship as mine.  
But I will breast the iampless main  
And sweep what wave I please;  
Ere whelmed or slain, more calm I'll gain  
Than in the sheltered seas.

## DISILLUSION

Water of the spring I take,  
    Water cool,  
And my burning thirst I slake  
    At the pool;  
And the fever in my blood  
    Sinks and dies,  
As I quaff the magic flood.

Now mine eyes are staring wide,  
    And I see  
The dim paths on every side:  
    Drearily  
Lead the paths o'er desert bare  
    Of delights—  
Sterile gloom is everywhere.

Yet one path but late I trod,  
    And it seemed  
All the glories of a god  
    Round me gleamed;  
In the opulence of joy  
    I was clad  
And the earth was but a toy.

Now that path is like the rest,  
    Stretching faint

O'er the desert's aching breast,  
And the taint  
Of despair and barren death  
Blights the air  
With most pestilential breath.

May these waters cool and clear  
Be accurst,  
And the hour that brought me here,  
And the thirst.  
I, that like a prince had died  
At fierce noon,  
Muse in this pale eventide.



## WORDS ARE AS FOAM

Words are as foam that lightly breaks  
In long white lines of frothing bubble;  
And thought's the wave that swells and makes  
That foam-life,—brief for joy or trouble:  
But, O, how ocean-deep and vast  
The flood-tide of the heart's emotion!  
Words are as foam, lightly upcast,  
Thoughts are but waves to crest that ocean.

For silent, 'neath the seething tide,  
By darkness whelmed and all forsaken,  
Lie shattered wrecks of youth and pride,  
And stancher ships—yet, too, o'ershaken.  
There slow decays brave hulk and mast,  
And Love's swift galleys of devotion:  
Words are as foam, lightly upcast,  
Thoughts are but waves to crest that ocean.

## SYMPATHY

In hosts the blue flag lilies rise  
    Above the stream;  
The flowers here have brilliant eyes;  
    They muse and dream.  
What care the little denizens  
Of these grassy meads and fens  
    If a soul be aching,  
    Or a heart is breaking—  
        What care they?

Have they not all song and hum  
    The rich day yields?  
When such laden breezes come  
    Across the fields,  
Giving more than they do take  
Of sweet perfumes, how can ache  
    Of a soul that's aching,  
    Of a heart, slow breaking,  
        Claim their care?

Yet doth flow a sympathy,  
    Silent, divine,  
Thrilling soft and warm and free,  
    Through air and shine,  
Sent from dreamy bloom and leaf;  
And I feel they share in grief  
    With a soul that's aching,  
    With a lone heart, breaking;  
        And they care.

## SHARING

Pollen grain to hungry leaves  
Now the worker bees are bearing;  
Now the smallest flower is sharing  
Some delight that it receives  
From the rain or sun or air;  
Now, now, now,  
Pulsing from the twittering bough,  
Clear is heard  
One reiterated word,—  
“Share, share, share.”

Smallest flower of the mead,  
And ye birds and bees wayfaring,  
That such humble joys are sharing,  
Shall not I be wise and heed?  
Why should any soul thus fare,  
Cold, cold, cold,  
In the cloak of self enrolled?  
From the heart  
Tear the veiling garb apart—  
Share, share, share!

## DREARILY

Drearily, O, eerily,  
Sigh the winds o'er land and sea!  
Every wave and every tree  
Shudders at the mystery  
    Buried those sighs within;  
And the sun forgotten is,  
And the summer's golden kiss,  
And dream-days of light and bliss,  
    As no such hours had been.

Drearily, so wearily,  
Have the pale years taunted me;  
Gibing their malicious glee,  
As the hopes and pleasures flee—  
    Shadows of truth and sin.  
Yet, though Love with Joy be flown,  
Yet the heart is not alone:  
Memories sing, and long 'tis known  
    Where such sweet guests have been.

## REFUGE

'Twas when the glade was brightest  
With flower and song and shine;  
When Summer's sleep was lightest,  
And all her dreams divine;  
When gorgeous hue was fashion  
In plant, in transient wing,—  
Then, through my noon of passion,  
Came Love, hovering,

And said: "Lo, all this splendor  
Of blossom, fern, and vine,  
And all these mosses tender,  
And all these grasses fine,  
Shall pass; and their deflowering  
Will leave thy hopes as sere—  
Only this pine, o'ertowering,  
Can outlast the year."

For in that fair glade-center .  
There reigned a monarch pine;  
A gaunt and somber mentor,  
Far-shadowing many a line:  
So ev'n the stariest flowers  
Were darkened in some wise,  
Nor, save in droning hours,  
Gleamed free to the skies.

And O, with heart of loathing,  
    Loathed I that gloomy pine ;  
That veiled in shadow-clothing  
    Those forms of frail design ;  
That touched with melancholy  
    Each slightest, lightest star,  
And all the glowing valley  
    Subdued from afar.

But now no birds are calling,  
    But now bleak winds that whine,  
But now the snows are falling,  
    But now no tendrils twine ;  
And now no hope of meadow  
    Can lie more sere than mine,—  
Yet now, in balming shadow,  
    Now, bless I the pine.

## FINIS

Love that had such wings to fly,  
And such might  
That the world was all too small  
For his flight,  
And he needs must dart the sky,  
Through star regions heavenly,—  
Is this he?  
Here, on black pall!

Love that sang for day and night,  
Dreamingly,  
Songs that rang like fairy gold,—  
Is this he?  
And these lips of silent white,  
Are they silent of delight—  
Silent quite;  
And pale, and cold?

Yes, Love's light afar is blown—  
Far, indeed,  
The fair light is borne through haze.  
Now, with speed,  
Cover close the face of stone:  
But one tear; then we'll be gone,  
Each alone,  
Down lonely ways.

## L'ENVOI

*Cruised we the light seas and rough stresses;  
Pine islands and palm  
We saw, and the gold of Love's tresses  
Through moonglades of calm.  
And still swells the sea; every islet  
Waves palm or proud pine—  
But one ship, abandoned of pilot,  
Is salt as deep brine.*

*And the shells of our joys and our sorrows,  
On silence of sands,  
Lie chill: but the thronging to-morrows  
May lift in warm hands,  
And glance o'er the pinks and the azures;  
Ev'n hold to the ear,  
Till voice of far dolours and pleasures  
They faintly can hear.*



# OTHER FANCIES

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## BALLADE OF UNREST

Well do we know on the world's gray pages,—  
Thumbed and ruffled and creased and frayed,  
Scrawled by poets and fools and sages,—  
Light of wisdom and folly's shade :  
Well do we know ; yet, undismayed,  
We plunge through dark and mist and fire ;  
Paying life's debt, till all is paid ;  
Driven by the goad of the soul's desire.

Thus did the heroes of outworn ages ;  
Thus did vassals, by sin betrayed ;  
Thus, when our ecstasies, sorrows, rages,  
Pains, and pleasures, suffered or played,  
Low in the tomb of time are laid—  
Pale as ashes of desert pyre—  
Onward the sensate calvalcade,  
Driven by the goad of the soul's desire.

Truth or folly by turn engages :  
Motley and velvet, in close parade,  
Laugh or sigh, as the dreary stages  
Pass, and memories wax or fade.  
Hearts courageous and hearts afraid  
Spur through the snow, the dust, the mire,  
Shining courser and stumbling jade ;  
Driven by the goad of the soul's desire.

*L'Envoi*

Princes who reap the uplands of trade!  
Slaves who sweat for contemptible hire!  
Ye, having life, have life's laws obeyed;  
Driven by the goad of the soul's desire.

## DRAB AND GRAY

O, the drab and gray of life!  
How it stifles, how it kills!  
All the streams of hope it chills,  
Silently, and love's warm rills.  
O, this drab and gray of life!

Not a phantom voice of night,  
Heard through mist of dream and sleep,  
Ebbing faint o'er Lethean deep,  
Dying echoless, did weep  
These frail words: "O, death, or light!"

But a spirit, grossly held  
In the husk of life and sense,  
Feeling all the waves intense  
Of passion, and in the dense  
Of doubt and darkness, truth-impelled,

Breathed the words: "O, light, or death!"  
And its sky, gray-hung and cold,  
Flashed no beacon streak of gold,  
Did no rifted hope unfold  
For the anguished eyes beneath.

Is it strange, since angels fell  
    Having light in fadeless streams,  
    That an earthly child of dreams,  
    Finding only false-fire gleams,  
Burned in self-created hell?

O, this drab and gray of life!  
    Ere the sullen hues unroll,  
    Welcome to how many a soul,  
    Falls the death-bells' gentle toll  
Through the drab and gray of life!

## QUEST

With violent hands a path I tore  
Deep through the forest of the world,  
And, in the very heart and core,  
A space I freed of briars, and hurled  
Myself on mossy floor.

Behind me lay the sanguine seas  
Of birth, soft-lapping, tremulous;  
Before me played Death's monodies:  
Ev'n from the portals of his house  
They crept on languid breeze.

And long I watched,—a straining eye  
My soul,—the pallid, sentient files  
That swept in eager madness by—  
Mad host of life!—and tears and smiles,  
Writhing so restlessly

O'er faces, paled by pain or thought,  
Or moved by mirth's delusive sound,  
I saw; and all their essence caught  
In one clear glance: all faces found,—  
All but one face I sought.

Dim faces, worn by hunger's tooth—  
Heart-hungry; faces blown with lust;

Sweet faces, lovely with love's truth ;  
Dark faces, where the clouds and dust  
O'ershadowed gold of youth ;

Keen faces, flashing all the fires  
That life hath lit or heart may bear :  
All hopes, all joys, and all desires,  
All love's delight, all love's despair,  
Lit new on various pyres,—

Showed now, as waving dream inwrought  
On vestments of the sandaled night,  
Pale seen of eyes but newly taught  
Sleep's mysteries : so swept this flight ;  
And yet one face I sought.

Till waves of baffling weariness  
And outraged longing surged my heart,  
Like waters bitter of caress,  
I watched in silence and apart  
The onward-sweeping press :

Yea, till lithe tongues of liquid gloom  
Moved stealthily upon my soul,  
To blast its inmost health and bloom,  
I watched ; then through the thicket stole  
To freer air and room.

Ev'n where cool silences caressed  
The summer's fevered brow and hair,  
And shadows bathed her eyes with rest  
Divine, I came—yes; even there,  
On lone, intruding quest.



But saw not in those eyes of light  
The light I sought, nor in her face—  
Flowerlike and warm and radiant-bright—  
The gleams that wear through time and space,  
Through the world's day and night.

. . . . .  
Behind me roll the distant seas  
Of birth, soft-lapping, tremulous;  
Before me sigh Death's monodies:  
Ev'n from the portals of his house  
They steal on nearing breeze.

## THE RIVER OF LOVE

Out of the swirling river I leapt,  
The moss-green bank attaining ;  
Out of the swirling River of Love,—  
Eddies encircling, enchaining,—  
Even in the heat of the fiery noon  
I sprang, with a heart disdaining.

And I said : "Here the shadows lie cool,  
And here the acacia flowers ;  
And truly that man is a fool  
Who drifts through heat-harrowed hours—  
Drifts down the turbulent River of Love  
To the pool that gulfs and devours.

"Buried in moss shall my coracle lie,  
Graved, and at rest forever ;  
Buried, I, too, shall wear the day through ;  
Here, on the bank of the river ;  
Here, where the gurgling waters of love  
Writhe in a serpentine quiver.

"And shadows heralding queenly Night,  
And Night, and her stars attending,  
Shall deem me a part, in faint half-light,  
Of the shore, serenely blending ;  
A sentinel guard of the River of Love,—  
A reft gnarled branch, o'erbending.

"The day may bind me with thin-spun dreams,  
But the night's swift language of fire  
Shall teach me, by sign of light divine,  
Hopes that will free and inspire,  
And lift me above this mad river Love—  
Insatiate stream of desire."

So musing, I drownsd in flowers and moss,  
Or watched the silvery gliding,  
And boats of voyagers swerve and toss,  
And voyagers, pale with riding—  
Riding 'mong rocks of the River of Love,  
And dangers,—lurking and hiding.

When lo! my woof of peace and of calm  
Fell, irrevocably riven;  
Lo, through the gleam of sun and of stream,  
A face in the swirl down driven,—  
A face o'ersplashed by the current of love;  
A spirit of hell—or of heaven!

And now with the coursing torrent I drift—  
Drift this heat-harrowed hour;  
Mocked by the mocking waters of love,  
Bound in the chains of their power;  
Drift down the turbulent River of Love  
To pools that gulf and devour!

## DUALITY

She is a queenly flower, she is a weed ;  
She is true gold of stamped imperial breed,  
She is the basest metal for man's greed ;

She is clear brook, she is the torrent dense ;  
She is the unshorn lamb of innocence,  
She is the serpent-coil of Sin's defence ;

And snowy dove she is, and ebon crow ;  
The white of love she is, hate's murk of woe ;  
Firm star above she is, yet—phosphor glow !

## IN PROVENCE BORN

"In Provence born, why ro'v'st thou here,  
O singer of endearing strains—  
Thou minstrel heart of light and cheer,  
In Provence born!

"This land, thou seest, with hails and rains  
Is drenched and pelted all the year;  
No flower blooms, no bird remains."

"Yet, lady, is this land most dear;  
And sweet its life and chastening pains:  
Nor loves more warm, nor eyes more clear  
In Provence born!"

### RONDEL

Speak from thy heart but a word reassuring,  
Speak a true word, be it never so weak;  
Dear, are the skies of our fair love obscuring?  
Speak!

O, better black darkness than sparkle and streak  
Golden as sunfire, but falsely alluring;  
Better the black night than love's day grown bleak.

No word? and lips are as stone gates immuring  
Captives of death; but thine eye and thy cheek,  
And the heave of thy breast, in language enduring,  
Speak.

## YOU WHISPER

You whisper: "Dear, our skies will clear  
Of darkness, and the languid year,  
    So sullen-sad, so numb, so dead,  
    Will blossom yet with hopes of red  
And promises of golden cheer."

Your words beat idly on my ear—  
But one I hear, but one I hear:  
    And still, when all the rest are fled,  
    You whisper,—"Dear."

O, how can sere and pallid Fear  
Wrench from my hours a sigh, a tear,  
    When so you lean with tressèd head  
    Against my cheek: all heaven is spread  
Around us; so, thus nestling near,  
    You whisper, dear!

## THE BURLY WORLD

The burly world will not be held  
To rule and law, will not be quelled  
    With paper bullets,—deftly creased  
    By poet, prophet, scholar, priest,—  
Will not be cribbed, nor bound, nor celled.

But moves, as in the days of eld  
It moved, primarily impelled,  
    That stubborn, coarse, licentious beast—  
    The burly world.

And would we have it tamed and spelled  
With visionary's charm? or felled  
    By every wind from west and east?  
    The ages say not so, at least;  
Sparing, whatever else be knelled,  
    The burly world.



## ANIMALISM

To be a dog, a free, a careless rover,  
    Low-crouching in the daisy-dotted field;  
Down grasses lush to roll over and over,  
    Catching a thousand odors—late unsealed  
By Nature, in her boundless prodigence;  
    To leave the trim and measured paths of habit  
For one wild hour-long revelry of sense;  
    To splash in stream; through brush, to course the  
        rabbit;  
To take with bounteous chest the sun-cleansed air!  
    For is this life I live? these pulseless years!  
These starveling hours that pine for kindlier fare!  
    These bounded days of narrow hopes and fears!  
A baser, grosser life than my poor dog  
E'en dreams of,—at my feet stretched like a log.

## A FACE ON THE BRIDGE

Toil-pale the face, but young and healthful yet,  
And all sanguine of life, though life harass  
With cares to bend a helmèd head of brass;  
Sweeping with morning where, tumultuous, set  
The tides of travel in keen, nervous fret,—  
This face I view, soft-peering from the mass:  
So, penned and latticed by the burdening grass,  
Shows through coarse meadow-growths some violet.

Out of each morning gleams a treasured space  
Of time, wherein I read that patient face;  
Crossing on bridge—how like the bridge of life!  
And all the passionate sharp thoughts that burn  
Pass from me as brief flame: daily I learn  
To walk unmoved through the day's hate and strife.

SYMPHONY NO. 6, "PATHETIC"—*Tschaikowsky*

Calm lakes, smooth rivers, undulating seas,  
Voicing light foam-songs for the amorous shore,  
Are left,—O, far behind! This is the roar  
Of ocean's voice tempestuous: here each breeze  
Is sharp with bared life's quivering agonies;  
And yearnings for strayed Peace, who turns no more,  
Float through the lulls of storm: now sylphids pour  
Love's requiem, in loveliest melodies.

And on this sea of passion and despair,  
Through stress of sleet and wave and vibrant air,  
A boat drives roughly; and a soul doth wait  
The last downsweep and final gulping gate:  
Bravely it waits, nor questions when or where  
Of the stern helmswraith,—iron-fingered Fate.

## IVAN TURGENEFF

No surer hand, O Turgeneff, than thine  
E'er shaped, with coloring of earth and sky,  
Against the white of language, tracery  
Most delicate; nor ear attuned more fine  
E'er caught the sob in Nature's voice divine,  
Thrilling through wakened hearts,—how silently!  
Nor soul more zealous-proud for Liberty  
E'er bore her armor or obeyed her sign.

Great Russian! In the fragrance that doth breathe  
Thy pages through; in hopes and fears that wreath  
Themselves o'er sorrows vast—vast as the drear  
Interminable steppes and marshes lone—  
In serfdom's faded scenes; in all, the tone  
Of truth and passion lives,—earnest, sincere.

## EDGAR ALLEN POE

(On October 7, the fiftieth anniversary of Poe's untimely death, the University of Virginia unveiled, with fitting ceremonies, a finely-executed bust of the poet.—*News Item*, 1899.)

Time, sifting negligent these puny days  
With careless hand and eyes of languid droop,—  
Dull weariness outlined in every stoop  
Of his frail form,—now suddenly doth raise  
His head: 'tis for thee, Poe, his roused gaze  
Is bent—for lo! glooms cavernous do loop  
Themselves and forth thy shadowy fancies troop  
Before him, sighing sadly down sad ways.

Poe! truly thou art crowned this day with fame.

Ah, truly this thy country, rude and slow  
To welcome thee in hour of light or shame,  
To-day doth herald thee with prideful glow;  
To-day doth crown all graciously thy name,—  
Yea, like Time, rouses at the name of Poe.

## RECONCILIATION

Three messages, from forth the flare and blare  
Of war were borne three mothers; and the same  
Dark word fell,—“dead.” And one upon God’s name  
Called loud and raised her pallid face in prayer;  
And one, made fierce by overplus of care,  
Cursed God and man with tongue for fiery blame;  
And one, nor pliable, nor wild as flame,  
Moved silent through the day with beamless stare.

Yet, in fair sequence, were these moods distraught □  
Blended and moulded by one kindred thought  
And led in gentle chains of melancholy:  
So when three women, meeting through the years,  
Viewed with like eyes the backward path of tears,  
They twined a wreath for Time of rue and holly.

## AN HIATUS

What man may know the true face of his mind!

Atzal, our singer-priest, our comrade, strong

Above our strongest to weave festal song,—

Atzal from his rush-mat arose, and, blind

Of sense, his way through temple court did wind.

There, in the night, I heard him curse full long

Man, priest, and God, as usurers of wrong;

Ay, Montezuma's self his wrath entwined.

Of his own mind what man may know the face!

When the next captive stained our jasper stone,

That the sun's love be more auspicious bright,

There was no step, no voice, of such free grace

As Atzal's, and no eye so keenly shone.

What of that strange hiatus in the night?

## HESITANT

Love spake to one in no uncertain tone,  
Saying, "Here are the flowers; stand now and choose,  
Or all the perfumes of my world ye lose  
Forever. Stand! make choice; choose ye but one."  
Now in Love's hands, unwithered of the sun,  
But sweet and moist with charity of dews,  
Were clusters sacred from profaning hues,  
And clusters red as blood and proudly blown.

And he who was to choose leaned to the white,  
But trembled back, nor craved the fragile grace;  
And deep in ruby cups, so strong to sight,  
He knew the glow of Death's exulting face.  
So mused he, troubled; and so fled the hours.  
Love left him in that pathway of no flowers.



## DEATH ROCK

The Trap of Death, a stone electrical,  
In Arizona's mountains of heaped shale,  
Basalt, and porphyry, and granites pale,  
Is shunned,—a thing to fear. No foot may fall,  
Though soft as down of thistle and as small,  
Upon its floor and live; and there's a trail  
Of charnel bones along the rocky vale;  
And airs of horror shift above it all.

Yet even this black hell and gorge of death  
Hath its love-story writ against its breast:  
Two, that had fled the tribe, with desperate breath  
Clambered these crags, beyond the sanguine quest;  
The hot pursuers, surging thick beneath,  
Fell, stricken.—Death and Love that night had rest.

## THE MAGIC FOUNTAIN

King Nemo's eldest son spurred forth alone,  
His old-young brothers laughing with the king  
At this wild questing and the fabled spring,  
That whoso drank of, though sense void as stone,  
Henceforth would feel Truth's blood his crimson own,  
And glide 'neath gloss and garish covering.  
So, when hoof-beat had died and armor's ring,  
Safe courtier jests about those halls were blown.

But when, o'er hoofless snows, halting, returned  
Their prince, haggard and white and beggar clad,  
And swept all faces, forms, with eyes that burned,  
The perfumed jest fell back, the welcome glad  
Within the jealous-hating heart was urned,  
And scarce the tongue could whisper: "He is mad."

## KESA, THE LOYAL WIFE

(As presented by Mme. Yacco and the company of Japanese players, of the Imperial Theatre in Tokio.)

Part strange of gesture, and of language strange,  
The pleasing primal tale of budding love  
With hates and jealousies again is wove  
For hearts that change not, though the whole world  
change,

And shifty custom fly o'er town and grange:  
For when these lovers meet within the grove  
Of cherries, and the pink blooms dance above,  
We drop the prompting leaf and with them range.

Japan! in thy rude music there's a note  
Of fragrancy that spices. O, thy voice  
Hath tone of simple freshness in it still,  
And, like an aromatic truth, doth fill  
Deceitful interludes of boastful noise  
With essence of an age and clime remote.

## BOCCACCIO

I, like the weasel, have my special burrow,  
When the wild winds are barbed with sleet or snow:  
He nestles deep 'neath some abandoned furrow;  
I, in my den, regret the summer's glow;  
Until, haply, I chance on that blithe vendor  
Of summer thoughts,—thy book, Boccaccio,—  
And far Italia's mosaic splendor  
And scenes chivalric soft before me flow.  
Adventures bold, the loves grotesque or tender,  
Fantastic comedy and tragic woe,  
Play then before me cross the gleaming fender,  
And I regret no more the summer's glow.  
Thou merry craftsman of sweet prose and rhyme,  
Thine is the monarch page for wintertime!

## CHANCES

A thought divine, with sudden wings and swift  
Parting the sordid tyrants of the mind,  
Comes, lucent-crested, and we grope, half-blind,  
For the bright meaning. Likewise there will drift,  
So near to us that any soul may lift  
Into its life, rare chances to be kind,  
Which slip and fade where none hath eyes to find,  
Ev'n in that instant we would weigh and sift.

Vain seemeth then the honor from hard years  
Wrested, and vainer still what wealth uprears ;  
And vain gleams Virtue's lamp—O, all is vain ;  
So there fly not,—as, forest-free, an elf  
Singing may fly,—beyond the walls of self,  
Sweet impulses, out-acted to fair gain.

## THE LIFE-CHAIN

These links, once washed in heaven's own molten gold,  
And all bright-beaded with elysian dew;  
This tarnished life-chain of lived days—so new,  
So light, so golden-pleasant to behold—  
How heavy now, how gray, how leaden! Cold  
These rings that slip my parted fingers through;  
Unmusical and harsh, they sound adieu  
To their fled brightness; all their tale is told.

Ah, yet, though gross to every eye of day,  
Though proved as false and vain in Truth's assay,  
Some glints and curves of grace these links retain:  
O'er coil cognizant of full-flushing ray  
Now palest gleams of dying fancies play;  
And memories, wan as moonlight, kiss this chain.

## A CONSPIRACY

Anon the emissaries of low hate  
Came soft upon me through my spirit's night;  
And all the earth was desolate of light,  
And eke the skies of heaven as desolate;  
And close 'twas whispered,—“Weighing so what fate  
Hath given thee, thou man of petty might,  
This heritage of men, this gift of spite,  
Wilt thou not pay the same in triple weight?”

My mind consented, “Yes;” my heart cried, “No;  
Keep far the slimy scales, ye reptile crew!  
Because the lights of day are blurred and low,  
And vapors damp the air with poison-dew,  
Will peace exhale from hate's envenomed flow?  
Can light relume unless love shines anew?”

## THE PLAY

Not sadness dost thou bring, Melpomene;  
Not sadness, though thy theme be death, but glow  
Of a clear joy is in me; and this woe  
Of mimic-life, these sorrows, are to me  
(Viewing them thus, like god of destiny)  
But as light drift of shadow: for I know  
The ending; and when death will wreck them low,  
These lives, ev'n then, love will claim victory.

But when, O tragic queen, I view thy form  
From the lit portal, or cothurnate feet  
Hear close behind me down the living street,—  
Ah, then, held ignorant, the Erinys-swarm  
Around, mixing life's bitter with life's sweet,  
Darks then thy weight of sadness like a storm.



## AMBITION

When, general-like, I muse on vast campaigns  
And draw concentered plans within the night;  
How I may scale the sheer Parnassian height,  
Or with bold numbers scour Thessalian plains,—  
Such epic grandeur stirs my heart that strains  
Of shepherd-music deem I poor and slight,  
And all my soul is girded for the fight  
Of conquest and renown and golden gains.

But sleep comes; then the day: and lo! the sun  
That wafts the giant vapors from the field  
Breathes also from my mind what night hath spun;  
And flowers of humbleness, that are revealed  
Beneath that eye of truth, bring then, each one,  
More joy than serried files of warriors steeled.

## CHEERFUL PESSIMISM

As I review what this spent day hath done  
With me, its slave, I can but marvel greatly  
At incongruities of shade and sun,  
At cynic hours and hours serene and stately:  
For deep in Schopenhauer's philosophies,  
My mind, unleashed and venturous for roving,  
Strayed through the morning with attentive eyes;  
And my tongue sanctioned all in speech approving.  
I said: "How true this is; and this, how true!  
How lost is man in hates and misery,  
In ignorance and folly! And this, too,  
The arrogance of women!"—Suddenly,  
Welled in my heart the cadence for a song,  
And I was happy as the day was long.

## ONE GLOW

So long as I may see bright Phœbus' beams  
Tinting the tremulous castles of the sky,  
And hear, far blown, the forest melody  
That greets all ears of dawn with elfin themes;  
So long as I may, gliding, muse on streams,  
Past dripping moss and ferns and flowerets shy,  
And talk with Nature ere her face be dry,—  
That long will gentle thoughts and quiet dreams,  
Crusader-like, strong in brave truth to dare,  
Drive from that desecrated fane—the heart,  
White, meager prophets of the creed of care,  
And cleanse of blot and stain its every part.  
Thou bud-crowned Nature! Mother! let me share  
One glow of thine that pales all wiles of Art!

## TRANQUILLITY

Lucretius, though thy atom-scheme may be  
Fantastical, of this there is no doubt,—  
That hearts that steer beyond the hue and shout  
Of striving greatness and servility  
Alone may gain the goal, alone be free  
For true life-joy, and do the gauds without;  
Content to view, in humble guise, the rout  
From the safe watch-tower of tranquillity.

Tranquillity! a mock-word for the age  
That is all darkly seething with unrest,  
That is so held in strife-ful vassalage  
By the curst god that rules the endless quest;  
Yet ev'n to-day that soul serene is blest,  
And through life's tumult wins the fairest wage.

## A GROUP

Above all others, incomparable,  
Four faces ever bear fresh charm for me—  
The firm white face of brave Antigone;  
Perdita's face, like flower of the dell,  
Dewy and sweet as any fragrant bell;  
Cordelia's face of proved sincerity,  
Aglow, serene; and, of fair hours that be,  
Love's gentlest face, Viola's, rules the spell.

This group of faces ever brings me charm  
And incense for my heart's repair. The harm  
Of idle, kindless moods they breathe away.  
These faces tell me, through their light and grace,  
That life is good to live and is not base;  
So the soul holdeth true from day to day.

## HERCULES

I dreamed of Hercules, the god of might.

He stood on radiant sands, beneath that fair  
Cool star that diadems the morning's hair,  
Where tossed a gleaming sea of foam and light,  
And shook from shaggy skins the dews of night.

And, for his musing eyes so placid were,  
So free of mortal madness and of care,  
I said: "O Hercules! in godhood dight,  
Dost now disdain those valorous deeds of earth  
For which men praise thee with impartial lips?

Nay, add this task for crown; add yet this one:  
Teach how a groveling race may stand in worth  
Erect and equal, through the sun's eclipse  
By Plutus' standard." He said: "My toils are done."

AMERICA—A. D. 1900

Now fraud and thievery strew thick the tares  
Among fair wheats of honor; and that man  
Who would mix foremost in the striving van  
Must root from out his heart what manhood bears  
For climes of happy sun and sweet soft airs;  
Must shape his gardens on a grosser plan,  
To brave deceiving winds; have mind to scan,  
With instant light, the pits, the shoals, the snares.

And are, America, thine eyes so dim  
To truth? or dost, in toleration sad,  
Regard the fleeting scandal of a day?  
Thou who mightst lead in honor! let each limb  
Gigantic with bright native blood be glad;  
Make thou the exulting wolves crouch and obey!

## CHARITIES

Through clamor of the sodden, swarmèd streets  
Ran light a voice: "Leave us alone, alone!  
We asked for bread and have received a stone;  
Wouldst gild the rock for us, ye canting cheats,  
And say that 'tis the loaf that Pharaoh eats!  
O, leave us now alone, alone, alone!  
Or share ripe firstlings of the harvest grown—  
Your mellow fruits, your wines, your oils, your wheats."

Leave them alone; or, as knit brothers, share.  
Lo, pagan days have softened their hard fare,  
And they can still endure in savage dress.  
But let the gift of kindness and free light  
Glow from thee, world, then will be truce to spite;  
For the unmeasuring heart may take no less.



## CHICAGO

With those who blame their gods for some ill chance  
And rail unwittingly along the dark,  
Stood I, Chicago! and thy faults were stark  
Before mine eyes—thy giant arrogance,  
The lewdness of thy postures and thy glance,  
Thy brutal, stolid creed, thy sordid arc  
Of widening unrest,—these I did mark;  
Then hurled at thee my curse, as poisoned lance.

But when, on distant levels of the plain,  
I mused amid the snapping mongrel crew,  
And saw thee bend not, for complete disdain,  
One mighty sinew from its purpose true,  
But rearing proud and stalwart,—then, I knew  
Thy face in truth; I was thy son again.

## LOUISIANA

Dreaming, the bayous gleam beneath the sun,  
Carelessly indolent, and the light air  
So stirless is that it may hardly bear  
Its heritage of odor; mosses, spun  
For the sad oaks, their trails of gray and dun  
Move not, but hang as sculptural; there  
Blows scarce a forest-message anywhere,  
Save when some mocker trills his glowing one.

Fair Sleeper, sleep; Louisiana, sleep!  
Sleep fair as sleeper of the legend tale.  
Let thy robustuous sisters revel deep,  
Or stand before the world, alert and hale:  
They are enough; keep thou thy silence; keep  
The languors of thy dreams and slumbers pale.

## FORT MARION

Dusk ramparts, trodden by adventurous feet  
In the fierce century of blood and spoil,  
Lift, sullen still, their lines above the soil  
They guarded once, nor flag of pirate fleet  
Fear, nor the war-cry and hollow beat  
Of savage drum, nor any blown turmoil  
From land or sea. Only, alone, I toil  
Up silent stones; the day is glad and sweet.

I brood not o'er the ruin, nor would tear  
Hushed secrets from its heart—the tyranny,  
The murderous sorrows of the dungeon snare—  
For 'gainst my face the breeze is beating free;  
Above is blue, below the world is fair,  
And froth the far white breakers of the sea.  
*St. Augustine, Fla.*

## WALDEN

Humiliation of rough ax and flame  
Hath bowed thee, Walden, but thy heart is rude  
Still at free core, and will not be subdued  
To petty creeds and mercenary shame;  
And still thy soul of silver gleams the same  
As when wild forest eyes o'er thee did brood  
At duskfall; and thy beauty is renewed,  
Even this day, for one enmeshed and tame.

Now well he knows by what soft chains and fine,  
Walden, thou held'st one voyager so fast  
That he could make of thee his world's true shrine,  
To be unalterable, and first, and last;  
That he could mock the worlds of toil and ease  
Alike, with cool and stanch philosophies.

*Written at Walden Pond, June 15, 1900.*

## EVENING IN CONCORD

Concord! no happier name on town was graven  
Than thy true-telling name was graven on thee:  
Peace is thy kind and gentle deity,  
And, flattered well, in thee doth make her haven.  
Not Peace with pulses cold and heart grown craven,  
But Peace too great and strong and proud to be  
Other than one with Nature's amity,  
As fair as daisy, and as wise as raven.

I sit upon a low rude hedge of stone,  
And thy home deity this eve is mine.  
Serene, I blend into thy very tone—  
I am thy note, thy hue at sunset shown;  
Three hallowed spirits weave my heart with thine,  
And thy sweet breath through all my soul is blown.

## THE GRAVE OF EDWIN BOOTH

No shade of worldly or of mimic grief  
Clouds this green slope, but all is lit and warm;  
For the sun's spirit, keen in flower and leaf,  
Joys every gentle fern and grassy form.  
So 'tis a cheering thought that here should rest  
One whom the sorrows of two worlds had known,  
Who, with free art, a hundred griefs expressed  
Beyond the cloistered limits of his own.  
Far from Othello's scopeless jealousy,  
Far from the plaintive wail and rage of Lear,  
Far from the web of bloody destiny  
That held Macbeth in meshes of strange fear,  
Far from sad Hamlet's life and hapless doom,—  
Beneath the sun he rests, clear of all gloom.  
*Mt. Auburn, Cambridge, Mass.*

## “THE MYSTERY OF LIFE”

(A Painting in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.)

Blue, beams the star of morning on the sea;  
And on this scene:—It is the rocky shore,  
Where, through loose jagged cleft, as through a door,  
The waves have borne a woman, sullenly,  
And left her limp and fair—a shell: to be  
No more than shell or weed roughing the floor  
Of crinkled slimy sand,—no more, no more!  
The fairest pearl o’ the tide, no more, is she!

And in brown ancient hands, beside that form,  
A head of white is bowed; and life is warm  
Within the husk of years; and thoughts are sown—  
Those world-old questionings that flame from men,  
Pale in the night; that foiled, but leap again  
Round Life’s embattled tower, unscaled, unknown.



## AMBER'S ISLAND

(It is hardly bigger than a Cunarder, this Little Chebeague Island, whose name I changed to Avilion, and from wave-washed keel to flowery bowsprit the eye never lights upon a defilement or a stain.)—*"Amber," in "Rosemary and Rue."*

Where the winds blow soft and sweet,  
And the daisies run to meet  
The blue sea down field and slope  
Of rough bank; and where a rope  
Of wild convolvulus vine  
O'er great tumbled rocks doth twine,  
Which the tides do leap to kiss  
Ere they leave the spicy bliss  
And ebb back with low complaining;  
Where the random birds are raining  
From high treasure-vaults of air  
Notes sincere and diamond-rare;  
And the pines are nodding free,  
In a green sufficiency  
Of balm and shade and sunny light;—  
Even there came I: and sight  
And keen odor and borne sound  
Of all things, so clasped around  
And islanded in sapphire sea,  
Were but partly strange to me—  
Misty-clear, as is a page  
Known and loved in a lost age.



Yes, I surely know this place!  
Know the fragrance and the grace  
Of these buttercups and daisies,  
And the roses wild, and mazes  
Of the tangled meadow grass  
Where the road doth wind and pass;  
And I know these birds that sing,  
And these rocks that bear the sting  
Of the salt lips of the sea—  
Surely, they are known to me!

For this isle is Amber's Isle:  
She its queen, there was no wile  
Of enchantment that is wove  
That it did not weave in love,  
Gracious to all hours of day;  
And, now she hath gone away,  
Still it duteously weaves  
Beauty for new dawns and eves.

Now that she hath gone away!  
"Is she gone, indeed?" I say  
To the flowers that round me dance,  
To the birds that o'er me glance,  
To the rocks, the waves, the sun.  
"She who felt your glory run  
Through her soul, to heal and clear,  
She would not be gone from here;  
From the shores whereon she wooed  
Blessed hours of solitude,  
Dreading to return again  
To the tyrannies of men."

Stay! this is no bird I hear,  
Nor a fairy piping near,  
Shepherding his atomies  
Down pale pasture of the breeze—  
No; it is the island's queen,  
Singing, with a voice serene,  
Songs, whereof I will not tell,—  
Knowing, surely, all is well.

*Casco Bay, Me.*

## STEPHEN CRANE

No stone doth mark, as yet, nor mar this grave  
Of one who wrote of heroes, and, as brave  
Himself as any hero of the field,  
Fell; fell with glory blazoned on his shield.  
So here, before a stone may tell the fame,  
And letter coldly to the world his name,  
I'll pluck this daisy from the clusters round  
And plant it loosely in the new-turned mound;  
The symbol white perchance may soothe the bed  
Of one who wrote with War's own pen of red.

*Elizabeth, N. J., July 8, 1900.*

## JACK—A DOG

“Within two months,” I said, “he will forget,  
And in new mould his fluent thought be set.”  
Dog and dear comrade of the grassy ways,  
How lightly judged in careless-worded phrase!  
For, in that time, came winging down the road,  
From green abandoned paths (together trod  
By us, when holding tenure and free lease  
On Summer’s riches and her gift of peace)  
Wreathing, in sudden white, the wind of Death,  
And “Jack” was written by that vaporous breath.  
Dog and dead comrade of the grassy ways!  
With pen as vaporous, your name I’ll raise  
A moment more along the failing air:  
Of all that Time will give, dear comrade, share!

## BELLE ISLE

Queen isle of beauty is the sweet Belle Isle;  
And bears the honor queen-like, with the smile  
And true regality of gentle breeding  
Alike for poor and rich. She would be feeding,  
Ever magnanimous, her subjects dear  
From the full measures of her verdant cheer,  
And soothing every heart where worry presses,  
And smoothing every brow with soft caresses.  
Ay, that same grace that charmed the barky prow  
Of Pontiac's braves doth gleam a welcome now.  
No longer wild, as then, but part retaining  
The ancient spirit whilst benignly reigning,  
Queen isle of beauty, thou art still Belle Isle.  
Happy my heart to share this day thy smile!  
*Belle Isle, Mich., July 29, 1900.*

## LAKE MICHIGAN

Thou lake of storm and dream,  
That hold'st of life the key,  
There is no wave for me  
But these the waves of thee!  
There is no blue of stream,  
But fair thou show'st it;  
The ocean's note supreme,  
Thou know'st it!

When torn with bitter thought,  
And bled the sightless wound,  
And ne'er a friend was found  
On all the guarded ground,—  
Ah, thou refused me not,  
But sought to ease me;  
Ay, ever, ever sought  
To please me.

And in thy gentlest tone  
Gave song so soothing sweet  
That not a heart might beat  
And be unsoothed by it:  
There was no timent known  
Thou didst not bring me,  
To lure from land of stone,  
And wing me,

And mount me high above  
My low and meager days,  
Till, through no falsing haze,  
I saw and scorned the maze ;  
Until I saw that love  
Alone was sparkling,  
When life's most regal grove  
Stood darkling.

Or with thy thunder-tone  
Gav'st thou such hint of power  
That all my griefs did cower  
And die in foamy shower ;  
And left me clean and lone,  
At thee to wonder,  
And at thy magics blown,  
And thunder.

Thou lake of storm and dream,  
That hold'st of life the key,  
There is no wave for me  
But these the waves of thee !  
There is no blue of stream,  
But fair thou show'st it ;  
The ocean's note supreme,  
Thou know'st it !

## SINGING THY HOPES

Singing thy hopes through the summer-green valleys,  
Over clean fields to the woodland's cool alleys,  
Still mayst thou wander down mossiest slopes,  
Singing thy hopes!

For on a day when the world's bitter malice  
Stung like a goad, fleeing hovel and palace,  
I heard thee, unseen, where the forest glade opes,  
Singing thy hopes.

And now, as I sit on my seat in the galleys,  
Comes the song of thy heart and inspires and rallies;  
And often I bend with the oars and the ropes,  
Singing thy hopes.



## BALLADE OF THE GRAY WOLF

When our sun rolls high and our earth is bland,  
And the seas are kin with the smooth blue sky,  
And the drowsiest month is queen of the land,  
And her butterfly rule is too sweet to deny,  
And the heart is a bower where fairies may lie,  
And ichor of gods runs swift with the blood,—  
Do we tell a light thought, of thoughts that fly,  
How the gray wolf slinks from his preyless wood?

No, never a one! But our thoughts we band  
In the silken bands of a chosen dye;  
Or loosing them, still outhold the hand,  
And flatter them ever, and keep them nigh,  
To dance in the warmth of a self-pleased eye:  
And openly clap them and shout "good, good,"—  
So furtive, so fearful lest they should spy  
How the gray wolf slinks from his preyless wood.

But our sun rolls low and our earth is spanned  
By the arches of gloom and winds that sigh,  
And chill in a desolate road we stand,  
Unpitied and scorned of the passers-by,  
And the cold stars mock our wherefore and why,  
And there is no light in the dusk of our mood;  
Ah, then we see, though the darknesses ply,  
How the gray wolf slinks from his preyless wood.

*L'Envoi*

Ye travelers that travel so shod and dry,  
Ye beggars stained with the dust and the flood,  
Turn boldly and face this same verity,—  
How the gray wolf slinks from his preyless wood.

## TRIOLETS

### THE LOST DREAM

A dream that was lost  
In the faraway dreamland,  
By years overmossed,—  
A dream that was lost  
Peers wraithlike, a ghost,  
From Futurity's beamland—  
A dream that was lost  
In the faraway dreamland.

### HUNGER

Hungers the heart  
With hunger unceasing :  
Alone and apart,  
Hungers the heart ;  
In crowd and in mart  
There is no appeasing :  
Hungers the heart  
With hunger unceasing.

### A NEST OF LAST YEAR

O'er this nest of last year,  
By the light birds forsaken,  
I bend and I peer ;  
For this nest of last year,

As my heart is, is dear ;  
And the warm tears are shaken  
O'er this nest of last year,  
By the light birds forsaken.

I HAVE SONG

I have sung my free song,  
And the singing suffices.  
To unharkening throng  
I have sung my free song ;  
Mid the world's right and wrong,  
That suns hearts or ices,  
I have sung my free song,  
And the singing suffices.

## A FLOWER

In a forest bower,  
Hid from human sight,  
Grew a nameless flower,  
Beautifully white.

And the dewdrops kissed it  
In the early light,—  
Kissed, and washed the flower  
Beautifully white.

And the busy squirrels,  
From the treetops' height  
Came to view the flower,  
Beautifully white.

And the birds of passage,  
Pausing in their flight,  
Sang unto the flower,  
Beautifully white.

Till a cruel maiden,  
Eager as the day,  
Crowned, and blossom-laden,  
Forced a pathless way;

And, plucking the flower,  
Beautiful and white,  
Bore it through the forest  
In too wild delight :

For, dashing the brambles,  
She, in sudden spite,  
Threw away that flower,  
Beautifully white.

Broken, and unnoticed  
In its bruised plight,  
Died the little blossom,  
Beautifully white.

And the birds and squirrels,  
They were sad that night;  
For they'd missed the flower,  
Beautifully white.

Ah ! but what's a flower  
In a world of might—  
But one nameless flower,  
Beautifully white !

Flaunting blues and purples  
Nod on left and right ;  
What's a nameless flower,  
Beautifully white !

Ah ! though rived and perished,  
Lost in utter blight,  
In some heart 'tis cherished,  
Beautifully white.

## LULLABY

In this hush of night  
Who can fright thee? •  
(*Blossom, blossom, nestle close!*)  
Lo, the fireflies light thee  
With swift golden light;  
Each is spurred by fairy knight:  
They would lure thee, with those gleams,  
To strange dreams.  
(*Blossom, nestle close!*)

But these arms shall fold—  
Guard and fold thee.  
(*Blossom, blossom, nestle close!*)  
Though the fairies scold me,  
Though they bribe with gold,  
Still these arms shall hold, shall hold;  
And a faithful haven keep  
For sweet sleep.  
(*Blossom, nestle close!*)

## A FAIRY'S SONG

Through the oak and fir,  
Love, the zephyrs stir;  
Near you were, dear you were,  
    Were you only mine—  
But thy fancy ranges;  
Thou'rt for other granges;  
Singing light, winging bright,  
    In this starry shine.

So I'll croon alone;  
Faithless elf, begone!  
Maddest one, saddest one  
    Of a wanton line.  
Ah! thy heart upspringeth . . . .  
Ah! how fair he wingeth;  
Singing light, winging bright  
    Through the starry shine.



## A GIFT OF THE SEA

There was commotion in the pines :  
The saplings shook with dread ;  
For on the sand-beach, at their feet,  
A white-plumed bird lay dead.

The saplings were but innocents,  
Nor knew of life or death ;  
Their only visitor, the breeze,  
Spoke with but half his breath.

He told them of the tropic isles  
Where played the sons of palm ;  
And nestled they by mother trees,  
And drank sweet draughts of balm.

Till tired grew the gray old sea  
To hear such prattling tone ;  
And so before their tender feet  
This white-plumed bird was thrown

Emotion swayed the parent boughs,  
And fled the glossing breeze ;  
But ere another morning broke,  
The sapling pines were trees.

## O'ERWHELMED

The day is too long for me, strong for me; lo! I am  
sinking,

Borne to earth by mere odor and sound and swift  
golden spears of the sun:

Bold 'gainst the morning I ranged, and battled, un-  
shrinking—

Now, overwhelmed by a zephyr, by wave-purl outdone.

For the day is too long for me, strong for me; summer  
breath sweeps me,

And I toss to its will as a blade in world of fragrance  
and dew,

And my lance it is shattered and hopeless, and the  
victor keeps me

Deep in a prison of green and gold and purple and  
blue.

Ah, thou day too long for me, strong for me, hadst thou  
but ended

Faint ere the noon, I had stood, dear fighting and  
strong;

Thou hadst not withed me and drowsed me, till, so unde-  
fended,

I fail 'neath the front of an odor, a color, a song!

### WHAT DIFFERENCE?

To sing of life or death—

What difference?

Life wears the flowers of death,

Death life's buds beareth.

Waste not breath.

But view both flowers and buds,

Snow-cold of sense:

They are but flowers and buds,

On Acre of Moods,

In Dream Woods.

## JUST A DAY

Just an hour  
For bird and flower . . .  
Then?—  
Then, child, away.

Just an hour  
For lovelit bower . . .  
Then?—  
Then, youth, away.

Just an hour  
For rule, for power . .  
Then?—  
Then, man, away.

Just a day  
To round, portray.  
And then?  
Ah! where away?

## GULLS

To the gulls I spoke,—  
    "Fools, to pursue,  
Through streamers of smoke,  
    This blot on the blue;

"To barter the wide  
    Clean fields of the sea  
For scraps from the side—  
    Beggars are ye!"

But the gulls laughed loud:  
    "Beggars? 'tis true;  
And fools in the bargain—  
    To do as ye do!"

## FAVORS

And the world will be asking for favors,  
From meridian glow to pale end,  
With palate and tongue for all flavors,  
And face disguised as a friend.

And neighbor will purr over neighbor,  
Or threaten, or grovel to slime,  
To gain a poor tithe of his labor  
Or money or power or time.

O a health to the lord of the jungles  
That leaps with a roar on his prey  
And through his successes and bumbles  
Declares a vouched purpose to slay!

And health to that Nature who grumbles  
And rumbles her warnings from far  
To the ear of the city that crumbles  
Beneath the doom of its star!

But the world will be asking for favors,  
From noon till the crash of its end,  
With tongue drooling creams of all savors,  
And voice purring gently,—“My friend.”

## MATERIAL

Death glared on one with horrid eyes,  
And said: "Prepare, arise!"  
As he made ready,  
Serene and steady,  
Death cried: "No, no; not so!  
Alone I'll go."

Now through the shadow of that vale,  
Up bubbled nigh this wail,—  
"Kind Death, but spare me;  
I'll nightly prayer thee."  
Death seized that scuff: "Enough!  
You're proper stuff."

## THE SCREEN

As once I went I spied a rent  
Along the smiling screen,  
And through I spied. On every side,  
Ah, what revolt was seen!

There, high, I saw the flaming law—  
A disk on distant hill—  
But, nigh, I saw no prostrate awe,  
But men erect to kill.

And bullets flew and pierced and slew,  
Yet shed no drop of blood;  
Though men were shot, they knew it not  
And as unscathed stood.

And rich and poor, the sage, the boor,  
Were robbed, and robbers, too;  
But that it stole believed no soul  
In all the thieving crew.

And licensed lust of dust for dust,  
Enwound with loop of gold,  
Was fiercely fain to rend the chain  
Ere yet the links were cold.

I backwards bent and gazed intent  
Upon that smiling screen:  
It was as fair as azure air  
Or groves jocund and green.



## DESERTERS

Love and Glory fade  
Down the glade;  
Kiss they smilingly the rose-tipt fingers.  
I am left alone.  
How the sea doth moan!  
Sunset lingers.

Ye wise stars, aglow  
O'er me now,  
Would we scar this hour for Love, for Glory?  
Let them flee apace;  
They have had their place  
In the story.

## A BURIAL

'Neath a sky of lead  
One was laid to rest ;  
And a prayer was said,—  
“ 'Tis all for best.”  
But out in the roadway,  
Glad, the children played,  
And a sanguine hunter  
Through the near woods preyed.

And I bent my head  
Lowly to the breast,  
While the prayer was said,—  
“ 'Tis all for best.”  
Yet, out in the roadway,  
Shrill, the children played ;  
And, with eager echo,  
Near, that hunter preyed.

## PEBBLES

Children laugh at pebbles thrown  
From the shore—  
Pebbles that, when they are gone,  
Gleam once more,  
With the native shingle strown.

Then, what though the songs I sing  
Have been sung?  
Brought the votive wreath I bring?  
Though, where clung  
"Was," "Is," 'neath "Shall Be," I string?

## A SKETCH

On the sands a gull,  
Lying,  
Wearied to the full,  
Dying.  
All the meadows near,  
Singing  
Happy notes and clear  
Ringing.

The expanse, a shield,  
Glistening.  
One that walks afield  
Listening,  
Happy-hearted, strong,  
Sending  
Self to wave and song,  
Blending.

All the meadows near,  
Singing  
Happy notes and clear  
Ringing.  
On the sands a gull,  
Lying,  
Wearied to the full,  
Dying.

## MYSELF

Thoughts spring, fly and die,  
And leave no print behind;  
But that I am I,  
I know with steadfast mind:  
Through all the whirl and glow,  
Only this I know,—  
That I am I.

Oft they lure me far,  
These stranger thoughts that come,  
Some as high as star,  
And some as low as tomb;  
Yet through all chill, all glow,  
Only this I know,—  
That I am I.

Welcome then, ye thought,  
To take what cord ye find,  
Tie in glowing knot,  
And all my fancies bind;  
For yet I still shall know,  
Lure ye high or low,  
That I am I.

## MY HOUSE

Stood I in a palace of stone,  
Wonderful, fretted ; it shone,  
For soft lamps were statued in rows.  
I said : "'Tis my house.  
My treasures ! I've known them of yore—  
Greek, Roman, Arabian, Hindoo."  
The owner strolled in at the door ;  
I left by a window.

Stood I at noon in a hut—  
Dank, and from sunshine 'twas shut  
By castles of ominous brows.  
I said : "Be my house !  
From threads white and simple I'll weave  
Such guises the gods may deem proper."  
A beggar returned in the eve ;  
I flung back a copper.

Shelterless, stood I aloof.  
"Doming or low, if a roof  
I'd have in these alien lands,  
I must build with hands."  
So gathered I stones and great boughs,  
And sand, with the quick limes to mingle :  
Even now on the tree of my house  
I'll place this frail shingle.

## THE FROST-WORLD

Late stood I with the crew,  
    Surly and mutinous;  
Now, I'm Columbus, too;  
    From ship,—my house—  
A virgin world I view.

I ope my door, and range.  
    In elf-tome history  
No plan of world so strange  
    As world I see,  
This once familiar grange.

My world! so white it is!  
    As ghosts had strown the seed,—  
Had strown it wide amiss,  
    For plant, for weed,  
To crown the realm of Dis;

To heap with purity  
    To free and fair excess,  
That this, the mystery,  
    No eye should guess—  
How nigh its hell might be.

What! shall this world of mine  
Prove but as worlds of earth:  
Swart gloom below the shine,  
Sorrow 'neath mirth,  
False the true-seeming line?

And I, Columbus-like,  
And shall I too bear chains  
If I my banner spike  
In these domains?  
No matter! Forward! Strike!



## TRUTH

Truth! it is the yeast  
In this dough we knead,  
'Tis the fecund seed  
Midst the rock and weed,—  
Truth! it is the least,  
And greatest;  
Worst, and first, and best,  
And latest.

For a grain, so small  
That no eye can view,  
Gives the essence true  
Unto virtue's hue:  
Vices, blown and tall,  
Who'd follow—  
But some tinct makes Saul  
Apollo!

Truth's the good and bad,  
And the heaven and hell,  
The hope-knolling bell,  
Joy's light marriage swell;  
Truth is burial sad,  
And revel—  
Nude, a god; ill-clad,  
A devil.

## NO KIN

Chancing on the sculptured form  
Of Shakespeare, one heart grew warm  
In a passer's breast, as he  
Through the park strolled restfully;  
And before the bronze he stood  
In a reverential mood,  
Feeling some of grandeur flow  
From those days of long ago;  
Musing with the poet-king  
At the glad creative spring.  
Soon he heard a voice exclaim,—  
"Stop, and look; Shakespeare's the name!"  
"He's no relative of mine,"  
Came the answer; "let's go dine."  
With a careless sneer 'twas said.  
On they passed with oxen tread.

No, no relative of yours!  
Naught of kin is he to boors;  
To the herds that downward root,  
Though above hang bloom and fruit.  
No; but he is relative  
To the souls that flame and live  
On the mountain crags of white,  
Leaping brightly to the light.

He is relative to all  
That are great or that are small;  
So each doth, of self, unfold  
Some true characters in gold;  
So each doth aspire to wing  
'Bove the clays that smirch and cling;  
So each doth some fragrance give—  
He to such is relative.

But to those who bear the chain  
Of a single life profane  
How can he be relative?  
They, ere birth, have ceased to live.

## BALZAC

The world of Balzac  
Is a world grown black  
With avarice, vice, and stupidity ;  
And money's the honey  
For lips harsh or bonny,  
And the capital town is Cupidity.

'Tis there one may start  
With bravado heart,  
And a brave purse where clink louis d'or ;  
But when he's felt many  
Hard stabs from that pen, he  
Will rejoice o'er a sou, through the floor.

Yet this world Balzac  
Does oft lure me back  
From plumed worlds of romance and vanity ;  
For though it is low, it  
Is life as we know it  
In the sordid sad world of humanity.

EMILY DICKINSON

The gentle red clover  
Was huge for her song,  
The bee slipping over  
A theme giant-strong.

And grass blades were lances,  
And fertile of might  
A wave's silver glances,  
An orchard bough white.

Yet sable Death, winging,  
Not o'er flew her song,  
Nor for her brave singing  
His strong theme too strong.

## THE PALE HERDERS

While asses bray and bulls do bellow loud,  
And stir the adulations of the crowd,  
    Why do the Hamlets and the Amiels  
Still herd strange sheep beyond that bulwark cloud?

Why do they herd unmarketable sheep  
Along the stunted verdures of the steep,  
    When they might make a music for the crowd?  
Or take no heed at all, and guardless sleep?

Yet there they sit, so pale in reverie  
That travelers mark the sad impotency,  
    And shrug and laugh, or pityingly say:  
"Alas, alas, such wilfulness should be!"

But some, who look with more undusted gaze,  
Note the strange sheep, and linger on their ways;  
    And some to hold such idle crook were fain—  
But O, how chill it is through evening grays!

New asses bray, new bulls do bellow loud,  
And stir new adulations of the crowd—  
    But still the Hamlets and the Amiels  
Herd their pale sheep beyond the bulwark cloud.

## CAPACITY

Prod not thyself for thought—  
Thought that is aught  
Will come unsought.

But where thy treasures are,  
Leave thou some door ajar;  
They'll steal from far,

These naked thoughts, to dress  
In thee their nakedness.  
Ah, may they bless

The garnered store they find—  
Not face to giftless wind,  
Naked, unkind!

## FRIENDS

“Be friend to thyself;  
’Tis thy lone hope:  
All else in life  
Is bubbled from soap”—  
Thus, down every age,  
Hath spoke every sage.

And, truth, it needs not  
The brain of a seer  
To read life’s screed—  
’Tis written clear.  
Keep home in thy shell  
And all will go well.

“But ’tis so lone here!”  
Not so,—explore:  
I knew one who found  
Friends, true, and four—  
Books, nature, a dog,  
And a crackling log.



## ROMANCES

A sage, from his mountain,  
Strayed down to the vale;  
He paused at a fountain,  
Himself to regale.

Two lovers, there loving,  
He presently spied;  
To his glance, reproving,  
They boldly replied:

"Old dotard, why fret thee  
At life, as 'tis known?  
Go onward, and get thee  
Romance of thine own."

Then sang they a ditty  
From love's dreamy page;  
He entered the city.  
What there saw this sage?

Romances of dollars:—  
A romance of mart,  
A romance of scholars,  
A romance of art,

A romance of pleasure,  
A romance of gall—  
Yea, life there did measure  
Out romance for all.

But back to his mountain  
Climbed he from the vale,  
Nor stopped at the fountain,  
His soul to regale.

## THE VETERANS

(Parade of the G. A. R. at Chicago, Aug. 28, 1900.)

Hurrah!

On they march,  
Through the white and welcoming arch,  
Veterans, grim and bent and gray—

Clear the way!

Some step spruce to fife and drum;

Some

Scarce may bear the toiling frame,

But game!

Every eye's aglow with pride,

Every face is vivified,

Every heart

Feels and acts its better part.

Hard antagonistic days,

Diverse ways,

Thoughts, opinions, prejudice

Hedge like ice:

But to-day one sun is glowing,

And, for all,

Lo, a common stream is flowing

Magical.

They are brothers,—brothers still!

Time may kill,

But no lesser hand can sever.  
    Brothers ever!  
Sworn to each in drench of blood,  
    In marsh and vale and wood.  
These were linked by links of pain  
    From Shiloh's hellish chain:  
These! what forged their brotherhood?  
    Gettysburg's encrimsoned hill:  
    And these stood  
    Ranged on field of Chancellorsville:  
    And these?  
    These knew the stress  
    Of the fateful Wilderness,  
And fought with Death amid the scraggy trees.

    Hurrah!  
    We'll cheer again,  
    And still again, again,  
    Ye iron men!  
Veterans that tread to-day your last great march!  
    On, on;  
    Beyond our welcoming arch,  
    Beyond all praises won,  
    On,  
Ev'n to the final camp, and stack your arms.  
    Ye heed no more alarms,  
    Your part is played;  
    Above your furlèd rags,  
    This reverence paid,  
    We'll raise our newer flags.

## THE CROWN OF BLOOD

Death held a blood-red crown.

“Which head,” he said,

“Of all the hundred heads, may bear this blood-red  
crown?”

The century of years

Upheld their dripping spears.

“Mine!” “Mine!” they cried, as each would cry his  
fellows down.

Death frowned:

“Silence! or I depart, and none be crowned.”

Back rolled the wave of noise;

But one assured voice

Advanced:

“I am that year,

Across whose carmine path War, smiling, glanced—

Bloody and large and near.

The crown divine

Is mine!”

Advanced a voice of thunder,—

“Not so; ’tis mine! ’tis mine

For cities rent asunder,

Tumbled the dusk leagues under.

All hence!

'Tis mine; 'tis mine!"  
Hissed then,  
As from a serpent's torpid den,  
In loathsome whine,  
The year of Pestilence,—  
    "'Tis mine!"  
    "Liar!"  
Shrieked the mad year of Fire;  
    "'Tis mine—mine!"  
    "Never! but mine!"  
Blest year of Wind and Flood,  
To me the crown of blood."  
So blustered they:  
But the last year of all outspoke serene and sure,—  
    "I was an epicure,  
    Nor gorged my prey;  
So all thy gods, O Death, grew kind and wrested  
    All honors down."  
Death gave to him the crown.  
No voice protested.

## HYGEIA

There is one goddess of the sacred hill  
That men may worship still—  
Hygeia, thou white of foot, thou bright of tress!  
There is one name beyond our profanation,  
One place to kneel and pour the clear libation  
In all heart-singleness.

Beneath the limpid skies Thessalian,  
Lo, what world-caravan!  
Pale votaries of renounced gods, they come!  
No charm circean now, no bacchic revel,  
Can stir the lip to mirth or lock dishevel:  
Unmoved they kneel and dumb;

Lifting thy pearls, O goddess, 'gainst the sun,  
That thou mayst smile thereon;  
Quaffing each sanctioned drop that sparkling plays.  
A kindred voice they own, these voices many,—  
A kindred voice for praise,—nor praise thee any  
That chant not thus the praise:—

“Thou sole lone goddess of the sacred hill  
That men may worship still—  
Hygeia, thou white of foot, thou bright of tress!  
That yet one name doth live for adoration,  
That yet one fane doth feel the poured libation,  
We can but kneel to bless!  
Hygeia, regnant!  
Behold, we kneel and bless!”

## "YOUTH"

(A portrait by Henri Rondel.)

Eyes that grasp one—half  
In a roguish laugh,  
Half in regal scorn,  
As by goddess worn ;  
Cheeks aglow, and hair  
Flowing thick and fair :  
Face that is the prayer  
Of Pleasure.

Keen, and glad, and clear !  
Nectars nourish her.  
Let the gods complain ;  
She, as proud, will drain  
Hebe's cherished cup :  
When they sit and sup,  
Lo! she snatcheth up  
That measure.

Raptured, as she moves,  
Not a heart reproves ;  
All the heaven is hers  
And the godly spheres.  
Youth! thou know'st that Earth  
Needeth more thy mirth—  
Thou, her dearest birth  
And treasure!



## SPOILERS

I loosed my fancies in a wood—

An autumn wood.

I said: "Bring gold, for me to hold

Through winter's cold,

That in the mind may clink,

And russet cloak, from beech or oak,

And blood for me to drink."

I loosed my fancies in that wood—

An autumn wood.

Back stole those spoilers through the wood—

The autumn wood.

They said: "No gold, nor mantle fold,

Nor blood behold;

To toss, to wear, to drink.

Our strongest plot availed us naught

To force one lightest link."

I slew my fancies in that wood—

The autumn wood.

## A MINUTE WITH SHAIKH SAADI

Let gem sink basely in the mire,  
It doth remain the same rare stone;  
Let dust of earth to heaven aspire,  
Yet, even there, as dust 'tis known.

---

A wise man, like an ointment vase,  
Is silent and of virtues full;  
The babbler, drumlike, irks the place  
With noise, yet empty is and dull.

---

As snarling market curs out fly  
At sporting dogs industrious,  
So men of idle breed decry  
The busy names illustrious.

---

A tongue of oil will oft unlock  
What arguing wisdom may not stem;  
For ignorance is as a rock,  
And so can bruise the brightest gem.

---

The sinner, prodigal and free,  
Who lifts some sadness from the day,  
Is better than the devotee  
Who begs and hoards the gold away.

The evil fortunes of the good  
But turns their faces to the sky,  
While the fair fortunes of the rude  
Links them but closer to their sty.

---

Though dress from sovereign's hand be fair,  
Yet seems our own rough garb completer;  
The great man's feast 'tis sweet to share,  
But yet our poor home-foods are sweeter.

---

Two persons labored to vain end—  
One gathered wealth and did not spend;  
The other gained, by books and wit,  
Science,—but did not practice it.

---

That which is musk we know by smell,  
Not by what crafty labels tell:  
If ye be skilled, O Painter, Poet,  
Ye need not speak, your work will show it.

---

On same served joint ten people feast,  
But two dogs snarl o'er stricken beast.  
Greed, with a world, is still unfed;  
Content dines rich on crust of bread.

---

Not every man that's glib of tongue  
In mart may mix the shrewd among;  
And many a gracious form and slight,  
The veil withdrawn,—O, what a fright!

## THE LAMP

(A Persian Episode.)

Lo! stood my bright belovèd  
Before me in the door.  
I rose, and my sleeve, sweeping,  
The feeble flame o'erborne.

Laughed she,—“O slave to darkness!  
Why didst thou quench the light,  
Ev'n on my steps of entrance,  
And leave us girt with night?”

I said: “Thou moon-faced charmer!  
What worth that petty glow,  
When, at thy smile, effulgence  
Doth through the chamber flow?

“Besides, what saith the wise man,—  
‘When comes thy love, and charms,  
Extinguish thou the taper  
And catch her in thy arms.’”

## HAMEH

Zafir slew his soul one night  
With a sword of flaming light,  
And he sought his peace in flight.

But from town to desert's rim,  
Through whirled sand and shadow dim,  
Lo, the corpse he dragged with him,

Till, beneath a craggy knoll,  
Stumbling on, he found a hole—  
Therein laid he down his soul.

And he said: "Thou angel-fiend,  
That I sheltered soft and screened;  
Thou, who blazed and flared and sheened,

"Using me as quivering veil  
For thy fires of red and pale  
To glint through,—as samite frail,

"Fluttering from side to side,  
'Tween the winds of lust and pride  
And the sweet airs purified,—

"Thee, ay, thee, this hand hath slain.  
Lo, the rival lights are ta'en  
From thy altar-home and fane.

"I am free of thee—'tis well!  
In third heaven ineffable,  
Let the angel Azrael,—

"Azrael, the dutiful,  
Shed a tear divine and cool,  
From his book thy name annul.

"Yet I'll lay thee towards the West,  
Meccaward, for thy full rest.  
Now I leave thee; so 'twere best."

And thereon, for nights and days,  
Wandered he the barren ways,  
Idly as the hoof that strays,

Till he gained, with heart elate,  
Jowf's fair palms of shade and date.  
Grasped he firm his staff of fate.

Low he bent o'er trickling stream.  
"Now," cried he, "I live my dream!  
Gentler than these drops that gleam,

"Shall my new days quietly  
Flow to ocean." From a tree  
Shrilled, all sudden, "Iskoonee!"\*

O'er that face the wind of pain  
Swept, and glanced the lightning's chain;  
Then his brow was cleared of stain.

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\* "Give me drink!"

And ere the repeated word  
From the boughs again was heard,  
Spake he, in calm,—“O hameh-bird,

“Well I know thy voice: I heed;  
So would I, though girdling steed  
Of the dauntless Nejdee breed;

“So would I, though borne serene,  
Where the air is cool and clean,  
A roc’s mighty wings between.

“Sound no more thy ‘Iskoonee;’  
Thou shalt have thy drink of me—  
Wait but till the stars I see.”

Zafir slew himself that night  
With his sword of flaming light,  
And the hameh-bird took flight.



## DAUGHTER OF DIVES

*Wines of Sharon and Sorek,  
And the rich red rose of love,—  
Can they lure thy griefs away?  
From thy life the stings remove?*

---

We saw her through the portal-gate,  
Fair as fair flowers she sat among,  
And handmaidens on her did wait,  
And for her cheer they sweetly sung.

No note was there might bring her cheer,  
Though delicate of tone and string;  
Her eyes were wild as eyes of deer,  
And heaved her breast with passioning.

*Wines of Sharon and Sorek,  
And the rich red rose of love,—  
Can they soothe these griefs away;  
Can they ease the sting thereof?*

To us, through moonshine pale, she came—  
As fragile-fair, a beam of night!  
Ev'n to the haggard house of shame  
Came she, so spiritlike and white,



And said,—“If you have that to give  
That is not hard of self, and chill  
As gold, then bid my heart to live,  
That is so bound, so torn, so ill.”

*Wines of Sharon and Sorek,  
And the rich red rose of love,—  
Can they wile such grief away?  
From such heart the sting remove?*

We saw her, ere the dawn had grown  
To day and knew a crown of gold,  
Down pace the porticoes, alone,  
With black bent head and eyelids cold.

From her white robes we saw a gleam  
Of quick light glitter through the gray.  
We saw her fall. As in a dream,  
We knelt above her where she lay.

*Wines of Sharon and Sorek,  
And the rich red rose of love,  
Could not lure thy grief away—  
From thy life the sting remove!*

## AT MIZPEH

White wools we spun, our hearts at flight  
With missel thrush and locust bird  
That made the summer orchards bright,  
Through casement heard.  
(Sweet child of Jephthah's! how thy song doth flow—  
Sweeter it soothes than balms of Jericho.)

Pure robes enwrapped us, soft and new,  
And with lithe gold our arms were glad,  
The fillets of our hair were blue;  
So we were clad.  
(Fair child of Jephthah's! how thy face doth show—  
Fairer to see than Hermon's velvet snow.)

She said: "My father's note I hear;  
He hath o'erthrown the waxen hosts.  
Why, when such victor draweth near,  
Keep we like ghosts?"  
(Bold child of Jephthah's! how thine eye doth glow—  
Bolder of glance than oryx netted low.)

Placed we sweet chaplets on the head,  
And timbrels beat, close following;  
She danced before with measured tread,  
And bade us sing.  
(Light child of Jephthah's! how thy feet do go—  
Lighter of pace than desert-dwelling roe.)

Stern Jephthah rent his robe atwain ;

He looked on her with fearful eyes.

"Alas, my child, thou art but slain

For sacrifice."

(Pale child of Jephthah's! pale of cheek art thou—

Paler thy cheeks than foam or blossoming bough.)

She said: "Father, let this be done ;

But for two months, so God will wait,

Among the hills we will bemoan

My maiden fate."

(Brave child of Jephthah's! vanquisher of woe—

Braver thy heart than warrior's, fronting foe.)

God smiled that day that she was slain—

There was no fleck in the fair sky—

For sacrifice more free of stain

Never did die.

(Pure child of Jephthah's! pure of soul, we know—

Purer thy soul than any maid's below.)

## MARY MAGDALENE

*(Lysanias, tetrarch of Abilene, to his nephew Narcirus at Athens.)*

Narcirus, dear Narcirus, hadst thou known  
How those few words of thine, so lightly strown  
O'er tabula borne hitherward to me  
At Rome—words traced, I doubt not, carelessly;  
For on you sweep (I see the impatient start!)  
To matters far afield—loosed in my heart  
The dumb and prisoned passion of pent years,  
And fire of sighs, and water of swift tears,—  
O, wonder then had welmed thee as a cloud!  
It was as though some regal shape and proud  
Had met me in the temple's silent space  
And had with hands majestic for grace  
Waved me across that silence, silently,  
Ev'n to the white shrine of Mnemosyne.  
For memories came more sudden than keen flight  
Of birds, dim seen in pale autumnal light—  
Gold memories of days full glorious.

So now, Narcirus, in the imperial house  
Of Claudius, where, for a restless week,  
I must remain, and nod and laugh, and speak  
Idly, and flatter with the flattering throng,  
I'll analyze for thee those surges strong—

Those memories—and haply so may find  
Relief and blessed solace for my mind,  
Ere back to Abilene I retire;  
And write, as well, those answers you desire.

For you must know that this Mercurius,  
This bold chief speaker, Paul, that didst arouse  
Such stir and clamor in the hill of Mars  
With doctrines of new life beyond the stars;  
Who preached the Unknown God,—ay, such an one  
That sent to die on earth his only son  
And raised him from the mute and joyless dead  
(So runs the story that this sect hath spread)  
For a true sign to men;—why, this man, this Paul—  
Full twenty years ago the Tarsian, Saul—  
I knew and loved. He was to me, in truth,  
The dearest friend and comrade of my youth.  
Not any night of utmost revelry,  
But if his face were lacking, mirth would flee,  
And all the hue and sparkle from the wine;  
And sweetest lutes and shawms were harshest whine,  
If his near voice I heard not. For a year  
We were as lovers fathomlessly dear;  
Yet our lives parted, as blown flakes of fire—  
I, for home, Abilene; he, for Tyre.

Before Jerusalem our parting was;  
On Mount of Olives. “O Lysanias!  
See how,” he said, “o’er teil and sycamine,  
These glistening tears of morning bead and shine—  
Sweet sorrowing! for sight of kindred hearts  
Faring from each for dim and lonely parts.

These tender grasses, this ripe-headed grain,  
Are swayed, not by the wind, but by our pain,  
That they so droop in dearest sympathy.  
The birds forbear their wonted melody,  
And stealthily, from dewy bush to bush,  
Redstart and starling and the joyous thrush  
Move silenter than golden crispèd leaves,  
Light wavering through flush of autumn eves.  
Now ere I turn for Joppa and the sea,  
And you to wend through fruitful Galilee,  
One brief hour from the day tyrannical  
We'll steal for balm 'gainst dreary hours of gall  
That soon may follow. Speak, Lysanias!  
Swifter than eagles the swift moments pass."

So down we sat beneath those olive boughs,  
And breathed anew our friendship; and the vows  
Clasped in the circlet of a glowing year  
Loosened, and found that they had grown more clear  
In eloquence, more steadfast in fair truth;  
So that to each fell memories more sooth  
Than Fancy's dreaming, and we voiced them all.

Ah, even now, Narcirus, I recall,  
Beyond the scattered years, what then we said—  
How we discussed, but briefly, scrolls late read  
Under wise Gamaliel's care and charge;  
How that our leaping minds, though given at large  
Lush Jewish pastures, still afield would range  
Where gleamed new rills through grasses moist and  
strange;  
How to the shores Hellenic, warm, divine,



With echoes of Apollo and the nine  
Sweet sisters, and voice no less warm, divine,  
And sweet than any of the heavenly Nine,—  
Sappho's, came we o'er the immortal seas  
Of thought; how into cool philosophies  
We'd plunged with all youth's ardor and rash zest,  
To straight belie those truths we loved the best;  
And of free days, and of excursions made  
By moonlight to one wild familiar glade,  
We talked, reconjuring again lost dreams  
Dreamt idly on the lazy lakes and streams.  
So dropt that hour in Time's too-eager glass.

And then we severed; then our lives did pass  
Singly and far apart; and from that day  
To this hath each kept to his separate way.

Mine through Samaria led; and that same night  
I lay at Shiloh. Never gleamed more bright  
The summer stars, never more gently crept  
The cradling breeze to soothe me while I slept  
Than on that housetop in the placid town;  
And never tenderer moon or lovelier looked down  
From heaven than that proud Dian of the skies  
That woke me with soft touch on brow and eyes  
At midnight. From that serene hour, till dawn  
Dispelled the witchery, I lay as one  
Crowned an anointed king of golden lands,  
Sea-girt, mid music; and a fleece of hands  
Invisible, but sensitive of all  
That soothes, caressed me with light rise and fall;  
And from the heavy sense all grossness rolled.

'Twas while I reigned in that pale land of gold,  
Monarch of thronging fancies, that there stole  
Across the court of dream where ruled my soul  
That sweep of lustrous eyes, the radiance  
And swift fire-essence of magnetic glance,—  
The star, the lodestar, that would ever shine  
Above my firmament, this life of mine,  
And guide me goldenly with steadfast rays  
Through lands of dusk and utmost devious ways.  
Sufficiency of splendor and of light!  
It peered aslant from veilings of the night,  
And down the intricate dreamways had gone  
Ere died that gleam that in the coming shone.  
And lo! no sooner had I found new birth  
In that new dawn than came the dawn of earth  
Most jealously upstealing,—coarse, profane,—  
And frail enchantments of the night were slain.

My man, good Habeeb, shouted from the court,—  
Part duteous, but most in voice of sport  
That I should wish to be aroused so soon,  
Whose usual hour, alack! too oft was noon.  
But I was eager to be on the way  
And to gain Ænon ere the death of day;  
So, having eaten some rough cakes of meal,  
Our mules we mounted and set off with zeal.

But nothing by that roadside could I find  
To waken from sweet trance my dreaming mind.  
No bird with song could waken—not ev'n he,  
The rarest voice of Jordan's minstrelry;  
Nor any field of flowers or fair wheat



Could lure my inward eyes from vision sweet.  
No; to tell truth, I would not have forsaken  
That light enchantment could my soul have taken  
Wings magical for loftiest pinnacles,  
To view all earthly charms, all heavenly spells.  
As, sudden, o'er my heart there fell an awe,  
And in my brain blazed a mysterious law  
I ne'er had read before, I mused away  
The long and sultry stages of the day  
Until midafternoon, when a sharp cry  
From Habeeb roused me.

Tumultuously,

Down the white road, between the whitened fields,—  
Now harvest-ripe, prophetic of rich yields  
For sowers patient,—came a huddled throng  
Of villagers; and we were borne along,  
Ev'n in the heart and bosom of that crowd.

To some I spoke,—“Friends, may I be allowed  
To raise a voice, protesting; I protest  
Against this burly and officious zest  
In backwarding my steed.—O, he hath teeth  
Which sometimes leap beyond their hairy sheath  
With piercing frankness, and his heels are fire  
To those who stir the embers of his ire.”

Quick answered one,—“Stranger, if you but knew  
The source and secret of this odd ado,  
You would not marvel at our trespass wild,  
But marvel rather that we seemed so mild.  
For know that in the hollow, 'twixt yon hills

Of terraced vineyards, there are coolest rills  
Of water and cool groves, and there but late  
We heard such words as even now vibrate  
In alert senses; there but now we parted  
With one of all mankind the purest hearted  
And of all souls divinest, even Christ,  
The sent Messias." Thus another,—“Spiced  
Were the tame sodden musings of our minds,  
At his first utterance, with truth. As winds  
Fanning a gale blow masking sands away  
From desert pitfalls and the depths betray  
To eyes half-blinded, so his clear words swept  
Away the flattering sophistries that slept  
Over our hearts and showed us as we were.”  
Spoke then a woman,—“Weary traveler,  
Press ye no farther through the dust and heat,  
But turn with us to Sychem. There i’ the sweet  
And cool of evening you will hear retold  
To populous courts those blessed words of gold,  
And of the manner of this man divine  
Will hear, and of like wonders. I and mine  
Know him Messias surely. At the well  
Sacred to Jacob, firm-thewed Israel,  
We met by hap; and truly, when he spoke  
With voice strong in its gentleness, awoke  
Within my breast a new and cleansing glow,  
Which still I feel and may forever know.  
To him the days that I had lived and spent,  
Fair deeds and foul,—ay, thoughts, the closest pent,  
And sad and secret phantoms of the brain,  
Were as wide daylight vistas, open, plain.  
Is not this then the Christ?”

O, how I write,  
Narcirus! how I stray in random flight,  
Forgetting your good patience and forgetting  
Coherency and all in this long setting  
Of wordy detail; tortuous as the flow  
Of Jordan—not as swift. Though you would know  
Few facts, and most are answered, still the stream,  
Once wakened from the dark to air and gleam,  
Must flow at will. But I shall try, dear friend  
And nephew, to glide smoothly to the end.  
What though at times I make a curve or two,  
As any stream of ample sweep may do,  
And bear thee, shouldst thou follow with my tide,  
Through cavern darkness and where jungles hide  
With cane, with willow, with dense tamarisk,  
The pastoral world and Phœbus' garish disk,—  
We'll soon emerge and woo the calmer scene,  
And hold with steadier will our course serene.

So, then, mid those mad folk, to Sychem I  
Straight turned, and gladly; for the town was nigh,  
And I could see its fair-appearing towers,  
From the hill's rise, and the deep green of bowers  
And orchard trees that cooled the long white walls.  
And when, ere dusk, through pleasant courts and halls  
And colonnaded avenues, I walked  
Where busy clusters buzzed, or stood where talked  
Some ancient red-turbaned Samaritan,  
Winding his hearers in a meshing plan  
Of doctrinal discourse,—when, as I say,  
The stir and bustle of each public way  
I felt; there seeing life, so free, so warm,

Light whimmed for various play with face and form,—  
I found it in my wish to bide a while  
In that keen place, and there, mayhap, beguile  
A week or so with novelty and change,  
With custom, and with entertainment strange :  
More specially, being received of them—  
Though garbed as Jew and from Jerusalem—  
With honor and wide hospitality.

Oft have I sailed across the shiftful Sea  
Of Dream, and, sailing so, it oft hath seemed  
That all my feverish days had been but dreamed ;  
That only now my life, true-poised and sure,  
Beat rightly the right course, through mists obscure  
And heavy-battling titan-hearted waves.  
O, I had lived a thousand lives, whose graves  
Closed far behind me ! and with buoyant sweep  
I cleft each heave of that untrammelled deep.  
Ah, truly, what the sages say is true—  
That every soul is dual. For I knew,  
When sleep came o'er me on that selfsame night,  
Again the freedom of such dreamy flight,  
And picked the threads of dream-existence up.  
New life was poured from infinitesimal cup.

I woke. The moon curved high ; the plants were wet  
With dew. I loitered near the parapet,  
And mused upon the strange and midnight scene,  
With mind yet half-adream. So lulled and clean  
I felt, it was as though my spendthrift life  
Had been cut from me and the very knife,  
Clear of the deed, placed in my passive hand

For token that my will could hence command  
What road, what soil, it would ; could shape anew  
Fair-spreading paths of beauty, or could hew  
Darkly through pleaching briars some wilful way.  
Yes, even as this town of Sychem lay  
Between the valleys draining east and west  
To Jordan and the blue Great Sea—the crest,  
The jewel crown and mitre of the land—  
So stood I, with my life on either hand  
Palely outspread: all the dim days were there,  
Past and to come, mist-hidden,—there, ev'n where  
Freed Israel marched with Joshua the bold  
In that oft-sung tempestuous time of old,  
They moved in faint review. Though no Levites  
Now hurled their threats or blessings from those heights,  
Ebal and Garizim, and all seemed still,  
Came there not mystic breathings from each hill,  
Where, like couched mammoths, in the quietude  
Of night they lay—shaggy with rock and wood?

At least I thought so ; but the thoughts, scarce worn,  
Vanished with swiftness. From the street, upborne  
Sweetly unto mine ears, came cadencies,  
Which rose and fell like the surf voice of seas,  
Singing, for Summer, some mock-wrathful song,  
Wherein stern chords are weak, the weak ones strong ;  
And presently adown that thoroughfare  
Came the strange music and a dazzling flare  
Of torches and swung lamps. At the first thought  
I deemed them marriage feasters that now sought  
Their scattered dwellings, but a closer ear  
Proclaimed them revelers of careless cheer,



Emboldened to the core by glow of wine;  
For thus they sang:—

“And o’er that joyance shine  
No sun, no sun;  
Apollo’s too benign—  
He spies on everyone:  
But we, Bacche!  
But we, but we,  
Swinging the thyrsus, are free, free, free;  
Free in the night,  
Free in delight,  
Free!  
Bacche! Bacche! Bacche!

“Again fill cups with wine—  
Have care, have care!  
Each drop’s a key divine  
Will open regions rare:  
A key, Bacche!  
To free, to free!  
Even as the gods be, so be we—  
Free of the earth,  
Free in our mirth,  
Free!  
Bacche! Bacche! Bacche! . . .  
Evoe! Evoe!”

Through the pale moonshine, clear almost as day,  
They came ere that last chorus died away:  
Fantastically came they, wreathed and bound  
In drooping flower-chains and with ivy crowned,

Throwing their torches from mad hand to hand  
And dancing, like lithe wraiths from shadowland—  
A mingled rout of maidens and young men,  
In number, haply, some two score and ten.  
And so, with dance and song, they had passed by  
And vanished, but for one keen roving eye  
Chancing upon me in that space of shade  
That clustered roof-plants in the moonlight made.  
Soon all that band of high and prankish blood  
Held their flambeaux aloft and silent stood,  
Upgazing at me from the narrow street.  
How near they were! My face flushed with their heat,  
And through my veins the ruddy current flowed  
Impetuous, and radiantly glowed  
My heart, as though, like them, I had drunk fire  
From the grape's heart and did as bold aspire.  
For I could feel, it seemed, their breath; could see  
Each curve that rose and fell voluptuously  
Beneath light robes of rarest Tyrian  
And many a jewel gleaming, and could scan  
Each face with clearness—its subtilities,  
The loose-blown hair, the wide audacious eyes.

A breathless silence. Then a murmur ran  
From lip to lip, and presently began  
More revelry. To the weird music's beat  
Again they danced, and did again repeat:

“Even as the gods be, so be we—  
Free of the earth,  
Free in our mirth,  
Free!  
Bacche! Bacche! Bacche!”

Then came much laughter, as a rain of flowers  
Swept over me in well-directed showers;  
And one bright garland round my waist did twine,  
A moment clinging in coil serpentine,  
At which rose joyous clamor and wild shout.

Debating with my heart, I watched the rout,  
Nor moved; debating if I should not keep  
These pale calm hours for unprofanèd sleep—  
Not tarnish them for privilege to be  
The maddest soul of that mad company:  
For knew I well my soul's capacities.  
Was this not better:—So, apart, to please  
The sense with contemplation of the scene,  
But mingle not in act? to hold between  
This riotous life and my desires the web  
Of fantasy, and view the flow and ebb  
Of whirlwind pleasures through its shielding folds  
With eyes still safe?—serene as he who holds  
Watch with astrologers on some gray hill,  
To glean the starry fields for good or ill.  
And, reasoning thus, those revelers appeared,  
Indeed, as habitants removed,—insphered  
On strangest world of all the strange far space.

A gleam of eyes, a regal head, a face  
Pale in the torch-flare, curved uplifted arms,  
In sinuous arch, that spanned a bosom's charms  
And dusked with shadow, and a voice that won  
Precedence above sounds of lavish tone,  
Which wafted, "Come;"—this in a breath o'erthrew  
Proud toils of thought,—this in a moment drew



My escaped soul to the established land,—  
This in an instant linked me to their band.

The brief stone steps that wound unto the street  
Knew but the flying pressure of my feet,  
And I had joined them: gladly was received  
My slight addition, gladly torched and wreathed,  
And garlanded with mock solemnity.

Then an arch mouth that hovered close to me  
Whispered: "Thou worshiper of fair late skies,  
So dropt amongst us; by the sparkling eyes  
Of Venus, thou art now right welcome here,  
With such fresh cheeks and face of happy cheer.  
But I shall lead thee swiftly to our queen;  
For think ye not, for all our frolic scene,  
Our minds own no restraint: think not because  
Our court is lawless that it has no laws,  
And that we live in utter dalliance."

Was I a dreamer whom the guides of chance  
Led dreamily through sleep's unfooted lands,  
To learn those secrets of the printless sands  
That may be shown? Some led me, and I went  
Tamely with them amid new revelment,  
Until again that fairest face I found:  
Then the trance-chains were broken; I was bound  
No more to sheer subjection; gently sprung  
Thoughts to my mind and language to my tongue.  
"O Queen,—I know you are,—of this blithe throng,  
You see, I come—I, that light dance and song,  
And all enchantments save one lifted hand  
And one sweet breathèd word could well withstand,

Bow thus before thee: take Lysanias,  
And from the crude and so unseemly mass  
Shape such proportions as thou deemest fair  
To live within thine eye-sweep—captive there.  
Did not proud Hercules, his strength in lull,  
Spin for the Lydian queen the servile wool,  
And work her will, obedient? Compare not me,  
O Queen, with that great hero-deity—  
But thou, how fairer than that Lydian queen!"  
"What words!" she said, "what gossamer words! what  
sheen

Of moondrift language! O, such flatteries  
Fall soothless on the ears that they would please.  
But you are welcome to our revels, you  
May tread with us the windings we pursue  
So carelessly—O, see your heart be light!—  
And I that am the queen for this one night  
Shall consort, through perplexing mysteries,  
Even yourself. Arise! Now, Lois, ease  
The trumpet's mute impatience."

This was said,

This last, to my arch friend, who tossed her head,  
Jingling bright golden coins that held the hair  
Back from her brow, and then, with eager care,  
Blew a shrill note peculiar, which wound among  
The tumult voices, chaining each free tongue,  
Until a thralling silence ruled complete.  
Soon we were surging down the shadowy street.

Gaining the gates, a glittering bribe of gold  
Released us shortly from the city's fold;  
Then all the freedom of that moonlit vale,

As fair as any feigned in poet's tale,  
Was ours for roaming—all the trees, the flowers,  
The shrubby hillocks, all, all, all, were ours.  
O, the rich night—how prodigal it was!  
How far beyond the sordid day's its laws!  
Now every blossom delicately slight  
Might loose, for its sweet peace and heart's delight,  
Those odors that in drowsy hours of heat  
Could grow no dainty wings wherewith to beat  
Impalpable through the impaling air.  
Now the fair skies of heaven were more than fair,  
So bound with shadow—do not shadows give  
The setting wherein joys and glories live,  
Starlike? And now each sound, each random tone,  
Each careless cadence to the breezes thrown,  
Caressed as music of a keen-strung harp.

Clear in that fertile vale, upjutting sharp,  
Stood certain tumbled ridges of white rock,  
Or bluish-gray, such as rude ancient shock  
Had postured strangely; and, this night, these same  
Appeared as muscles of some giant frame,  
Stretched prone and low upon a vanquished field  
Among the ruins of his spear and shield.  
Soon treading lightly up one rugged slope,  
I saw where 'neath the crags a door was ope—  
Dark, and rough-hewn. Through this rock door we  
passed  
Singly, and gained a cavern dim and vast.

A hundred cubits were the walls apart,  
At least conjecture. Now, within the heart

Of that wide chamber swelled two mighty trees,  
Which arched above our heads their canopies  
Of verdure, and roof other none there was.  
Depositing my torch, the while a buzz  
Stirred lazily the languors of that room,  
I peered about through half-relievèd gloom.  
The cleft brown walls and yellow ledges knew  
Frail flowering presences, and, higher, grew  
Wild honeysuckles, striving to be free,  
Scaling the topmost stones for liberty.  
Bright birds down fluttered through the doming green,  
By sudden flame distracted ; there the clean  
Sleek-collared turtle flew, and orioles  
Golden I saw, and gorgeous-plumaged fowls.  
At whiles a star was seen, but peeped no moon.  
With branches light and leaves of sweet lemon  
The floor was littered, and on that strewn floor  
Lay spread a feast, delicious to its core.  
There swelling bowls of kibby stood, asteam,  
Dishes of lebbeny and clotted cream,  
Fishes and rice and thinnest wafer-bread ;  
And various fruits in season there were spread  
In color heaps and fragrant pyramids ;  
And for such jaded palate as forbids  
Free relish and insatiable delight  
Clay-balls from rich Damascus could invite  
A novel tasting : also, crisp roasted peas,  
Sweetmeats, pistachio. But o'ertowering these  
In all affections, as themselves o'ertowered  
With graceful bulk all dainties that endowed  
The feast, gleaming, were jars of wondrous wine.

Thus faring rich, did each at ease recline  
And let luxurious hours unnoted fly,  
Till pleasures furled their wings most languidly,  
And songs grew careless of the measured chime  
Of music, breaking from the bonds of time.  
By this had dancers danced us many dances,  
With easy liquid gestures and bright glances,  
And tales and following laughter had been heard,  
And merriment pressed from each jesting word.  
Now soon the rosied cup ceased to inspire,  
And hands fell listlessly from lute and lyre,  
And stole a soothing silence through the place.

Long had I gazed on that surpassing face  
That breathed close by me down the mirthful hours—  
A peerless flower, among expanding flowers  
Torn from far-scattered gardens of the world;  
But when our voicings daintily were curled  
Within some crevasse of those walls around,—  
As in a sea-cave sleeps the ocean's sound,—  
Again, I gazed on that surpassing face,  
Gleaning anew for beauty and for grace.

No stain of henna or rare foreign dyes  
Profaned the cheeks or shaded the clear eyes—  
Soft-shining lights of dark, caressing brown!  
Nor ornament she bore, saving a crown  
Of snowy pearls; but, gold-brown, the hair  
Gleamed free,—loose dancing, or embosomed fair  
As goddess's of Homer's deathless story.  
O, her whole aspect was a whelming glory,  
Whereon the sense might feed, insatiate,



Till the last folding of its earthly fate.  
Those full red lips that swelled to meet Love's kiss  
Might give more love than they could take of his ;  
Those arms might bend the radiant archer's bow  
And send darts swifter than his skill could show ;  
Those eyes beholden once, the blindfold god  
Would ne'er again in willing gloom abroad,  
But treasure every beam of sun and moon.

I said: "There is a vale of Lebanon,  
Ev'n in those highlands where your Jordan wakes  
To being and his first light murmur makes,  
Called 'Meadow of Clear Fountains.' In this place  
My father reared a villa, which might grace  
With dignity Italia's proudest slope.  
That now is mine, and if my soaring hope  
May reach a sweet fulfillment, that is yours ;  
Together with such passion as endures  
In a new heart, new-lifted and redeemed  
From cheerless stagnancy. O, once I dreamed,—  
Why, 'twas last night at Shiloh! these your eyes,  
Now bending on me with such dear surmise,  
Lit then with starry splendor all my sky  
Of vision: was it not fatality?"

Laughing, she said: "Of course, of course it was ;  
What else but fate, thou crude Lysanias :  
Would not life's fardels press with deadly weight,  
If we could shift them not on that same Fate?  
Fate, then, be thou my god—a god as good  
As any formed from metal, stone, or wood,  
And prayed at daily by tossed argosies

For homeward winds and fair auspicious seas;  
Fate, so thou doest all that I require;  
Fate, so thou givest all that I desire,  
And pamper every whim of day and night,—  
So long, O Fate, I'll be thy proselyte!  
But if my flattered ears have gained the truth  
Of thy so fervent words, my goodly youth,  
You would enstar me 'mong the mountains blue,  
As mistress to thy home and like to you.  
The crags of Lebanon! their majesty  
I've known through summer azures; I could be  
Happy among them for—how long!—a week?  
No, no, Lysanias, I would not seek  
To tarnish with my utter variant ways  
The promise and the beauty of thy days.  
That bird that dips along the sprayful sea  
Must bear no bolder heart nor sing more free  
Than Mary Magdala. Therefore, to-night  
Live as we may, the morrow's wakening light  
Will beckon sunward to Gennesareth.”  
“And there,” I cried, “go I; and O, let death  
Alone gainsay—not thou!”

She gazed at me  
A space with musing eyes; then, tenderly,—  
“There grows in Persis, as you will no doubt  
Recall, (for so its fame hath blown about  
The world), a tree that in the glaring hours  
Shows blighted, withered, all bereft of flowers,  
While fading blossom-dust, as white as snow,  
Sheets thick and negligent the ground below.  
Now, when the star Hesperian lights on high

The flocks of heaven to pastures of the sky,  
With silent throe, from whispering groves apart,  
That tree of sorrow yieldeth up her heart;  
And, on the passing of the midmost hour  
Of night, it spreads like one celestial flower  
Of fadeless being, of immortal breath:  
Yet, on the touch of day, it withereth.  
My life, Lysanias, is like that tree.  
Comes there at times some blighting phantasy  
Across my mind, and thoughts of shrouding gray  
Cloud to a semidarkness that my day.  
Could laughter clear the gloom, O, I could jest  
And fright afar the devils of unrest;  
But 'twill not: only, only can the peace  
Of kindest-catering night bring swift surcease.  
Ah, then there gleams no opulence of heaven,  
But that my chariot-soul might there be driven—  
Light-drawn by lightest thoughts of winged desire;  
O, then there thrills no ecstasy, no fire  
Of passion, no fine winding of delight  
That is not found me by the catering night.  
Come, I shall sing for thee, Lysanias;  
Cannot this dwindled night, eager to pass,  
Be stayed a while with music? See, they lie  
All snug adream, our gallant company!  
Two hearts alone the sluggish charm disdain;  
Two hearts yet live,—the rest by sleep are slain.  
Look! there the lovely Mirta veils her eyes—  
O, lovelier now than in her coquetries!  
See how my frolic Lois yet will smile:  
Though held to drowsiest bounds, she'd romp the while.  
And what a bunch of beauty have we here—



Bulkês, Hada, Cypros; and, drowsing near  
The bold Greek, Scander, see where Miriam lies :  
He is a god of gold in those young eyes.  
Careful, I'll steal her idle dulcimer,  
And sing for thee."

On which, with motion subtiler  
Than the lithe Libyan panther's, sleightful, she  
The instrument from twining arms did free,  
And played it soft and low with surest skill;  
Fitting unto its voice her voice's will,  
Which was at first most gentle. Cool and clear  
As morning is in springflush of our year—  
That frailest spring, dying almost at birth,  
Yet making for brief time a heaven of earth—  
Was the cool-throbbing music; and the tones  
Inwove with it were cool and gracious ones.  
My thoughts were strangely led by those sweet guides.  
With them I clambered, swift and free, the sides  
Of grassy hillocks; and where meads were bred  
To complete beauty, there my sense was fed.  
A child for glee, again I knew the hours  
By the slight curlings of the petaled flowers,  
And let my fancy nestle down again  
In soft and fragrant blooms of hill and glen.  
A thousand glowing growths held charms to please—  
Globe hyacinths, the frail anemones,  
Daisies and marigolds and daffodils,  
The nodding cyclamen, blue iris, squills,  
Sweet anise, basil of the fields, the clove  
Gilliflower, for bees a treasure trove,  
Pink phlox, dame's violet, asters of white,

The flaming tulip, lilies chaste as light  
At sunrise is and queenly 'bove compare,  
And the wide sisterhood of roses fair,  
And lupins tall, and arums, and wild thyme,  
St. John's-wort, with its golden flowers in prime,  
The stately narcissus ;—these but a few  
Of those the thousand growths that glowed anew  
For me that instant. Sang no mounting bird  
Across my spring of life that was not heard  
Singing and mounting with the music sweet,  
Voiced magical, its wings of tireless beat.  
The broad sloped threshing floors again lay spread  
Before me, and new grain was winnowed  
By careful husbandmen,—that while I sat  
Propt careless on the meadow's yellowing mat,  
And, so, watched lazily their movements brisk ;  
Or, with glad playfellows, in romp and frisk,  
Centered the far-blown chaff, being a child  
Once more—free-chartered, privileged, and wild.  
But as the clarity and sweep of art  
Caught glow of passion from the singer's heart,  
Lo, every note became a note of fire  
Upwhirled on wings of light to its desire,  
And every simple word and pale became  
Complex, fantastic, roseate with flame,  
And now that crystal coolness fell away.  
Behold, what mist had lifted ! Life could ray,  
Free and intense and radiant, around ;  
And the white fancies of my heart were crowned  
With answering flame and glowed as radiantly.  
So was I borne, so passionate, so free,  
Along the sounding waves tempestuous !

No burly banqueter, from Neptune's rouse,  
Parting the waters of the reeling sea,  
Might sweep more passionate, exalt, and free!  
O, the whole essence of whole life outpoured,  
Sudden and fierce, with each true-sounded chord  
Of music; and the ecstasies and fears,  
The hopes, the sorrowings of passion-years,  
Blown by sharp flame of life's omnipotence,  
Beat as irradiant rain across the sense,—  
Ay, as a sleet of fire did sweep the soul. . . .  
A quavering, and silence . . . On me stole  
A strain like dripping nectars; and that strain  
Became the chosen links for slumber's chain.

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Throughout the Jewish land, Narcirus, there  
Is not a view more gloriously fair  
Than from Mt. Tabor, when the evening hushes  
The profane notes of day and soft the blushes  
Of heaven fall golden on the vales and hills.  
A scene of serene grandeur 'tis; it fills  
The heart alike with wonder and with peace,  
And with most delicate subtilities  
Of thought makes musical the chimeless brain:  
Almost, it frees the soul of gyve and chain;  
So that, beyond the narrow scope of flesh,  
Beyond the sin, the darkness, and the mesh  
Of low-restraining, sorrowful desires,  
The spirit might be clothed in sunset fires,  
And catch some wine of glory as it spills  
Richly among those hosts of rounded hills  
And down that fertile plain, Esdraelon.

Then from the snowy giants might be won  
A tempering coolness. Hermon, best of these,  
Though veiled so close in spotless draperies,  
Would give fair greeting; and each peak would bow  
To heap the chalice-cup with gift of snow.

But dearer than the mountains, or the plains  
And valleys fruitful, which the trees and grains,  
The flowers and grasses pattern variously  
With hues of light and shade,—there, one may see  
The Galilean lake—how beautiful!

Narcirus, for a month that lake did lull  
My life; I was its votary; the swell  
Of those blue waters as desirable  
Became to me as date-groves to the eyes  
Of caravan beneath wide blazing skies.  
For came Love's voice through every lightest purl,  
Love's eyes peered out from every azure curl;  
And still, in calm or storm, Love's breath was known  
To make all airs divine with monotone  
Divinest of all tones that may be sung.  
A month, Narcirus, gleaming white among  
The glooms and darknesses of herded years,  
Like diamond's gleam or gleam of happy tears.  
Spelled hours we sailed, my queen and I,—my queen!—  
Along those limpid waters' molten sheen,  
Lustrous and glittering with the fervent sun;  
And endless, shifting glories were unspun  
From sea, from plain, from cloud, from craggy crest,—  
Ay, from all things whereon dream-eyes might rest.  
Was there a hint of beauty, palely given?—  
Straightway our fancies built a radiant heaven.

Was there a sound in nature, faintly blown?—  
Ravished no harper ears with fuller tone  
Than swept to us over the silver seas.  
Was there a wind of velvet that might please,  
And odorous?—Nor frankincense nor myrrh  
Could stir with more of sweet a peaceful air.  
So sailed we hours, abandoned to such ease  
As dreams may give, 'neath fluttering canopies  
Of purple; and our galley kissed the waves  
At amorous will, and they became our slaves.  
So, too, our slaves the flowers, the trees; each palm,  
Lotus and oleander held a balm  
For us: the potency of separate charm  
Could soothe the mind, as softest-circling arm  
The body soothes, when arms are tenderest,  
And lull indefinite unrest to rest.  
Even the thistles and the leafless thorn  
Were kind to us as any flower born.  
The birds, of others free, were slaves to us.  
And when we ranged the cities populous,  
The fortress towns, the clustered villages,  
What pleased there of delights and luxuries  
That were not ours?

One day, on sea of glass,  
Our boatmen oared from royal Tiberias;  
Prow to the north, where smiled Capernaum;  
Sails drooping idly, for no wind would come.  
The airs were languid, even as my thought,  
And on my dreaming the brisk world was wrought  
Quiet, a picture—for the distant stir  
Of fleet, of herds, of clouds, the quieter.  
One sweet light voice could rouse, alone had power;

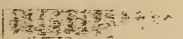


Soon spake the sharer of that tranquil hour,—  
“Behold, how beautiful Gennesaret  
To-day, and my Magdala, see, how set  
Like a white jewel mid the clasping green.  
Dear, you have fed your eyes on richness, seen  
In far soft lands an ampler majesty  
Of plain, vast-spreading, citied regally;  
But now, for my heart-comfort, let your eyes  
Be as eyes wakened to a paradise,—  
So virgin-new that they would pasture there  
Oblivious, nor dream of aught more fair  
Than this, my native plain. Lysanias!  
O, say its living beauty doth surpass  
The dead pale lands of withered memory—  
Then will its living beauty live in thee!  
Here first I drew my breath of innocence;  
And the surrounding hills, and the intense  
Sky, and the blue lake, and the happy vales  
Companioned me through girlhood; and the tales  
They whispered me were memorable and sweet,—  
So that, despite of time, they linger yet.  
There, where the watchtower looms, I once—but look!  
Look how the boats flock shoreward; see, each nook  
Of beach and quay alive with multitude  
Of swaying people,—gestural, endued,  
So seems it, with the ardor of one thought.  
Join we? What think you? O, my heart hath caught,  
Ev’n here, the fervor of their surging zeal,  
And it would mix with all they say and feel.”

Lightly our boat veered to the peopled shore;  
And the dividing blue dwindled before

The long, free, even strokes of tireless oars,  
And we had landed on that curst of shores.  
"Curst" did I write; and yet I hardly know  
Whether 'twere better I should leave it so,  
Or else write "blest." For truly who can say  
Whether Elysium or Hades lay  
Within the compass of a centered act  
Which lies so deep in years; which time hath racked  
Into a thousand forms intangible,  
Taking at whim the glints of heaven or hell.  
For though I lost the soul of my desire,  
And fair Love's ardent heart of whelming fire,  
What I did gain I set so far above  
The flame and fire and ardency of love,  
That, like as gold, it shows amid the dross  
Of life: it fills all measure of all loss.  
O, 'tis the soul of love—beyond the heat  
Of love, how cool and delicate and sweet  
In memory! Yea, in my soul it lives,  
This soul of love, and, there, assurance gives.

"The Nazarene, the Christ; he speaks to us"—  
So answered prompt a scrivener. Emulous  
Of the enfolding crowd that held us fast,  
Along the chosen plain we moved; at last  
Sighting a mound, luxuriant of green,  
On the sloped side of which a man was seen  
O'erlooking all; and by sheer dint of will  
We gained a place of hearing near the hill.

  
He was of noble stature, this same Christ,  
And well-proportioned; and his face enticed

All eyes,—for beautiful it was and kind,  
Yet with regality and power behind  
The infinite grace, the quiet tenderness;  
And if by one rude word I would express  
His look, but one, that word were "sympathy."  
His tones they filled the very soul of me  
With wonder: so simple and so profound—  
The music and the poetry of sound  
Garbing the naked thought, but showing 'neath  
Lit eloquence the truths of life and death.  
The words were plain to hear as no or yes.  
White purity of thought, unselfishness  
And utter abnegation was the theme;  
And how the treasures of the earth that seem  
So rich for grasping were but poor indeed,  
When God's great love the fowls of air did feed  
And clothed the languid lilies of the field  
In more than kingly pride; how that revealed  
Were all men's souls unto the Father's eye;  
Nor could the veil of thick hypocrisy  
Suffice to hide, but all men should be known  
By their proclaiming fruits and justly shown.  
"Judge not," he said, "that ye may not be judged.  
View not the motes some wind of chance hath lodged  
Within thy brother's eye and fail of light  
To know what beams obscure thine own frail sight.  
Throw not thy holiest bread to dogs, nor cast  
Your pearls before the swine, lest they at last  
Trample them under foot and rend the giver;  
Yet ever what ye would have men deliver  
To you, in word or act, give ye to men."



More in such strain he spoke—high words!—and then  
Descended to the plain. The multitude  
Pressed round, but brushed him not; they were subdued

To inexplicable and nameless awe.  
Then glancing sidelong, my love's face I saw,  
And marveled at the change I saw thereon,  
And at the light that from her eyes outshone  
Like veiled fire; for the rose cheeks were wet  
With tears and the lithe lips as firmly set  
As gates that hold at bay a mounting flood.  
I said no word, but silent, waiting, stood.

Slowly towards us came this Christ, the crowd  
Giving him way. The waning sun was proud  
To shine above him. On the hair, like wine  
In color, golden-rooted, long and fine,  
On the cheeks' tempered bloom, the forehead's white,  
And in the eyes of blue and brilliant light  
There was full majesty of poise and glow.  
And as he walked, with glancing look, and slow,  
Behold a leper, muffled close around,  
Pressed into view and sank upon the ground  
Before him, saying,—“Master, shouldst thou deign  
To notice me, then were I clean again.”  
And straight the Christ put forth his hand, and said:  
“I will; now be thou clean.” The ghastly head  
He touched with gentle fingers. Lo, the man rose  
Clean, with his eyes clear-shining and the throes  
Of new blood working in each pallid cheek,  
And with light step his home and friends did seek.  
On this same moment Mary Magdalene

Stole from my side, ere I could intervene  
My strength and protestation, and she fell  
Ev'n in that place where late the miracle  
Was wrought; her gold head drooping to the grass  
Like a drooped flower—so faint and fair it was!  
And as a flower revives when moist winds stir,  
So that head lifted when Christ spoke to her  
Softly a word or two. I could not glean  
The syllables, but what my Magdalene  
Returned to him ran something like to this,—  
“Nay, I am all unworthy. Not that kiss  
Of pure pale airs that fan the peaks of white  
At holiest sessions of the soft moonlight,  
Nor that lone purity of air-borne cloud  
Athwart the burning noon, nor any proud  
Mysterious signal of the failing sun  
Could breathe into my soul, as thou hast done,  
Sweet instant messages of stainless peace,  
Such balm and comfort for the torn heart's ease.  
This leper that thy mercy didst recall  
From worse than folding tomb and deathly pall  
To a clean life, was he not hideous  
And shunned of all? so gross,—O, so leprous!  
Yet was his outward seeming fair indeed  
Beside this soul inmost, which thou didst read  
With pitying and all-perceptive glance  
That soothed divinely. Now, while radiance  
Of new-beholden glory doth invite  
New thoughts, I thank thee, Master, for the light  
So comforting.—O, yet it will be blown  
Away! and then?—O, I shall be as one  
Thirsting for water and beholding how

It cools near grasses may not cool the brow  
And perishes; and so shall I succumb.”  
Then Christ: “To-morrow, at Capernaum,  
Find ye the water.” And thereon he passed,  
With a kind look and gesture.

Through the massed

And pressing throngs I forced an arduous way  
For the late suppliant, nor did delay  
Our passage till the seacoast had been gained  
And that stone quay whereto our boat was chained.  
The arm that clung to mine was white and moist  
And all a-tremble, but my heart rejoiced  
To see the lights of reason in those eyes  
Dwelling, and hear the voicèd pleasantries  
Again, and know the cadence of her tongue;  
For through some musing interval she sung  
Gently a song in modest undertone.  
Along the quay we walked, and quite alone.  
Bound in the gold of evening arched the sky,  
Hushed as the air around us; harmony  
Lay double on the waters; not a wave  
Might more than hint its heart and, timid, lave  
The sands of sympathy. I could but feel  
That on this fallen day was set some seal  
Of high approval: yet I could watch it die  
With anxious mind and vague and brooding eye.

And soon I spoke: “The wonders of this day  
Are marvelous beyond all speech to say;  
Had not mine eyes vouched truly these same acts,  
Nor tongue fanatical, nor lettered wax,

Had stirred the credence of a fond belief.  
This Christ that spake so fair and gave relief  
To loathsome leprosy, hath wisdom's power,  
And powers medicinal, and a full dower  
Of magic veiled by low simplicity;  
Yet, though he show of men the prodigy,  
Still is he man."—"No, he's a god, a god,  
Lysanias; nor such hath ever trod  
Before on earth in regal humbleness,  
To soothe the painèd world, to guide, to bless!  
Doth not each drop within my veins attest  
To his divinity? For my sweet rest  
What supplicated peace hath from the sky  
Fallen in hour distraught? But now 'tis nigh!  
Soon shall I rest."

Thus talking in strained mode,  
We came to where our silken galley rode,  
Like a fair sea-swan, on the drowsing sea,  
Manned and complete and eager to be free;  
And, pausing shortly, each on other gazed  
Through a sad silence; then, abashed and dazed  
By the foreknowledge of a sealed event,  
Which, without word, was made most eloquent  
To both, cast downward glances on the sea.  
There was no light of hope thereon for me.

She said: "The resolved purpose of my heart  
Hath in thy heart been sounded: there's no art  
Can guise the simple language with wreathed grace,  
Or lend a coloring softness to the face  
Of truth, severe and white;—so, love, farewell!"

She moved away. I caught her hand; I fell  
Before her, speaking, with a tongue of fire,  
What words I know not: in my brain a pyre  
Was kindled—they were the wild blown brands  
That flared and glowed at random on waste sands.  
And when the passion of my voice was spent,  
She said,—“Lysanias, from this intent,  
Which now grows strong within me, none may turn  
My will; nay, not ev’n thou, for whom doth burn  
Still in the tabernacle of my soul  
The rarest incenses of love. Control  
Thy grief; for sure that dearest grief can give,  
Controlled, a strength immortal, power to live  
Dauntless through destined years, and sweetness, too,  
And quiet lights of beauty. Falls no dew  
Like the pure dews of sorrow. May you know  
The touch thereof. I say no more; I go.”

Her hand I loosed, regrettingly, and then  
Clasped it anew, saying,—“Our thoughts have been  
Ever at even flight; so be they now.  
Yea, my rebellious heart with thine shall bow,  
And rest like thine submissive. Whate’er gods  
There be that rule men from their soft abodes,  
And thwart and scourge, and strangle with the thread  
Of wayward circumstance, to such my head  
And heart I bow—so thou wouldst have it so.  
See how they bend!—Not yet! Yea, thou shalt go;  
But take some gift—O, stay!—some simple gift  
That will keep memory clear, as far we drift  
Coldly apart—some gift—one gift!”



She said :

"Be sure, dear heart, until this heart be dead,  
Thy love shall gleam as vestal's lamp within  
A temple purified and cleansed of sin,  
And that clear flame will keep remembrance clear  
For thee where'er thou art, or far or near.  
Yet will I take of thee one gift—the vase  
Of alabaster, kept for ancient phrase  
Egyptian and the quaint lost mould: 'tis filled,  
Thou know'st, with precious ointments—nard, distilled,  
And of the wounded myrrh, the first rich tears.  
This will I bear with me; and when the years  
Bring to my life some more than mortal hour,  
This then I'll break for consecrating shower."

Directly, without word, I sprang aboard  
The galley; and bore soon from scattered hoard  
Of treasure to her down-stretched hand the vase  
Of ointment, gazing mutely on her face  
That was both frail and strong; and finding there  
Such steadfast light as only eyes can share  
With a resolvèd heart, I opened not  
My lips to voice the echoes of sad thought  
Vainly, but pressed them to the fingers white  
For momentary touch and last delight.  
Then signaled I to loose the galley free;  
The poised, obedient oars splashed to the sea.  
"Back to Tiberias," I said; and feeling  
A new wind of the north upon us stealing,  
I bade that sails be flung to amplest spread.

The gold of sundown touched the bared gold head,  
Lone on the lessening quay; and soon the blue

Form faded. Swiftly we sailed. There was no hue  
Of color in the sky or on the sea.

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Narcirus, in the spring, I look for thee  
To bring thy face of gladness, and thy free  
Bold voice and heart, and all thy happy ways  
To my poor court, to cheer the cheerless place  
As thou wert wont to do in springs we've known.  
Then, in some cloistral night, when there is blown  
To us sweet secrets from the white jasmine,  
And no star gleams but shares its heart therein  
For a bright fellowship with lowliest earth;  
When each true thing doth show its soul of worth,—  
Then, my Narcirus, having heard, I'll tell  
Strange stories marvelous: till then, farewell!





# CHOP SOOY

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*(Being a rather incongruous mixture of allegory, fable, satire, metaphysics, and sheer nonsense.)*



## LIFE'S MOSAIC

I was reading Nietzsche.  
On that page  
The weak ones were stroked not;  
Strength was the god  
Sole to be incensed  
On earth.  
Lo, this thought came to me—  
That priest and that scribe,  
The pale buzzers, the dilettanti,  
All lifted the hands of a palsied impotency  
They'd captioned "LIFE."  
Which fell back again on their idol,  
When released,  
Clanging base metal inanely.  
And as I read,  
Sounded near the clangors of metals,—  
Hollow and false.  
But soon I looked from the window,  
Saw the tiniest blades verdant 'neath oak-trees,  
Daintily cowering field-flowers, and unbashful roses,  
A fluttering of butterflies, a far sweep of sea-gulls,  
A mosaic of beautiful weak things and beautiful strong  
          things all over the earth:  
So I put aside my philosopher,  
And went out for a walk.

## DREAD

Fear of the unknown!  
Causes unguessed, unseen,  
Simple causes,  
Even ridiculous causes,—  
Yet of man's ignorance,  
His pitiable weaknesses,  
His superstitions,  
His misty entanglement of creeds,  
Make they not play-toys  
For devils?

Last night I was sleeping,  
Careless, abandoned,  
Dream-deserted,  
A chip in Lethe,  
A three-year-old,  
A blank:  
Sudden it seemed  
That all earth was shattered  
To fragments,  
As globe of crashed arc-lamp,  
Storm-blown into darkness;  
And I, on one atom,  
Nakedly shivered  
Alone.  
Down weird thunderous avenues

Fell various colors of star-dust—  
Blue, red, and golden—  
And Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn,  
Were not.

Leaped I from the bed  
In terror's paroxysm—  
Moist, craven, a-tremble,  
Pallid, limp, utterly  
Distraught;  
Yet when through the window  
Floated an isolated rumble of cab-wheels,  
From over the pave-stones,  
Immediate drowsiness lulled me.  
Without a thought,  
I turned again to my pillow.  
Two minutes afterward,  
I was a blank,  
A chip in Lethe,  
A three-year-old.

## VALUES

Once, in a great city,  
There dwelt an honest man—  
Stranger, 'tis true!  
This man had two quarters:  
Smooth the one from much using,  
But the other a counterfeit,  
Glittering, argent,  
Basely leaden at heart.  
Over a counter  
Handed this man the silver;  
'Twas waved back in scorn:  
Absently, then  
Gave he the base one;  
Nimbly fingered,  
'Twas taken.  
Whereupon this honest man,—  
Puzzled, abashed, enmisted,  
Girt in the darkness Egyptian,—  
Slowly walked out to the curbstone,  
And thought  
Deeply.



## ROOMMATES

The man who tried to run away  
From himself  
Gave up at last,  
And said:  
"Shake, old boy; I see plainly  
That we must bunk  
Together."

So now they dwell, fairly harmonious,  
In the same house;  
Although 'tis a grievous truth  
That they occasionally have an  
Extempore boxing  
Match,  
And sometimes go in and out  
And around  
For whole cross days  
Without looking at one another  
Or even speaking  
A word.

## KEEPING YOUNG

Through that thicket of decayed underbrush,  
A library,  
I was stalking a word,—  
An artful, curious word,—  
To the death.  
Suddenly aside  
I looked;  
Saw, bent o'er brown primeval leaves,  
A pale old young man—  
Hectic, feverish, unnatural.  
I said:  
“Friend, what’s up!  
Is our good steady-going planet  
About to drop into  
The orbit of Saturn,  
Freezing us all  
Out?”  
“Nay, I know not,”  
Said he;  
“But I read once in a book  
That one may keep young  
And cheerful  
By maintaining his enthusiasm  
On some certain layer, or stratum,  
Of human knowledge.  
Sir, these five years have I

Kept myself young  
And cheerful  
By maintaining an enthusiasm  
To define specifically, definitely, precisely,  
The real cause  
Of the Variability of Multiple  
And Homologous  
Parts."

This quaint youth  
Contemplated I a space  
Silently,  
Looking my deep pity  
And commiseration.  
Then I handed him  
A quarter  
And told him to go over  
To the lake  
And take a boat-ride.

I myself,  
Through that thicket of decayed underbrush,  
Continued to stalk a word,—  
An artful, curious word,—  
To the death.

## A WOODEN INDIAN

Moss-backed aphorisms  
These:  
That Love laughs at locksmiths;  
That Love hath wings;  
Also,  
That the same capricious little god  
Will not be chain-bound,  
Except with chain of his own  
Forging.

Yet one fool brain conceived a chimera,  
Which was,—  
That one might drag Love  
Into a cold lusterless life  
By the ears.

One day  
A man propounded this odd question  
To himself:  
“Am I a wooden Indian?”  
Then he swept Descartes, Hegel, Spinoza,  
And several others,  
Into the waste-basket,  
Shied the “Critique of Pure Reason”  
At the astounded cat,  
And went out.

When the clock had ticked off certain hours,  
He returned.  
Gazing long into guileless, unconvinced eyes,  
He propounded this mathematical  
Problem :  
"What is the precise point  
Of difference  
Between,—  
A wooden Indian,  
And,  
An unreflective, shallow-pated, blunder-footed,  
Thistle-eating, herbivorous,  
Arcadian  
Ass?"

## TWO CRITICS

Two critics married,—  
Ay, the soft nuptial knot  
They tied.  
What delight  
For gods and men!  
His hair (she said) was always mussed up.  
Her hat (he said) was never on straight.  
Is that tie (she inquired) a manifesto  
That you have turned toreador?  
Or—  
Is it simply a danger signal?  
Ere you warble that soulful ditty  
Again  
(He suggested)  
Will you not kindly  
Bolt the door of the china-closet?  
*Etc., etc., etc.,—*  
Chiefly, *etc.*

But all this happened  
One hundred years  
Ago.  
Last week  
Two wing-weary shivering souls  
Passed in the bleak mid-spaces,  
Vacant-cold of eye,  
Without slightest suspicion  
That they had ever met,  
Each the other,  
Before.

## WORK

It has long been a favorite  
Axiom of mine  
That work, like time, was  
Made for slaves.

But this morning I saw a domesticated  
Epileptic cat  
Chasing her maltese shadow  
In and around  
A hastily improvised  
Circus-ring.  
Shortly afterward,  
A well-fed but entirely  
Unsophisticated  
Dog  
Whirled by me,  
The end of his long bushy tail  
Grasped firmly in his  
Mouth.  
Even now,  
As I sat here by the roadside,  
Trying to become honest enough  
To break into  
The exclusive society  
Of nut-dropping  
Squirrels,



I saw a perspiring millionaire  
Head swiftly his new  
Automobile  
Towards a swart dim blur on the clean sky.  
I called:  
"Where to,—friend!"  
The answer reached me with dust in its  
Throat,  
But finally coughed out:  
"To work!"

## MY ENEMIES

What saith the cynic?  
Life would indeed weigh heavily,  
At times,  
But for the pleasant hatreds  
Of our enemies.

Those pleasant little hatreds,  
Like little stuffed  
Manikins,  
I often delight to set up in rows  
On top of rural  
Fences.  
Then I back off a distance and  
Knock them over  
With coarse wayside  
Stones.

However,  
I soon tire of that kind of  
Child-play.  
There are so many other things,  
In the near live fields,  
To look at.  
After awhile,  
The grinning little over-bowled manikins  
Are very far below the new

Horizon-line  
Of my on-journeying  
Regard.

Yet, somehow,  
I am always passing careful,  
And precise,  
In making true mental notation  
Of the grassy abandoned  
Falling-places  
Of those little manikins.  
Who knows!  
Perhaps,  
On the day after to-morrow,  
I may wish to hurl  
More stones.

## HEADS

To me, reader, even to me,  
Your most humble and obedient servant,  
The occasional, jaundiced, world-reorganizing  
Carper  
Applies that vulgar appellation,—  
“Swelled-head.”  
Anger-flushed, slowly, musingly,  
Raise I my hand to the high-domed habitation  
Of my insulted mentality.  
Alack! 'tis often to find  
My hat-lining taut with strange stretching;  
And aware I become  
Of gaseous, vaporish spaces  
Surmounting gray convolutions of brain.  
Nothing daunted,  
Straightway I assign myself  
The task of remodeling and worthily filling out  
The unsightly vacuums.  
When I have shoveled in enough  
Meritorious knowledge  
To justify possession of protuberances  
Unique and embarrassing,  
Boldly I turn me to light.  
But look! these same saffron-faced wise men  
Have been so intent on the reorganization  
Of worlds

That their own heads have shriveled several six-  
teenths,  
And divers hat-brims, down-journeying,  
Are now pressing out unregarded pinna of ear  
Into lines quite palpably  
Horizontal.

## PROFESSORIAL BRAYERS

Once in so often,  
(However, not infrequent)  
An unbalanced, muddle-headed, professorial  
Ass  
Breaks loose from his lush  
Clover-fragrant meadow  
And gallops, hee-hawing, down the  
Common hot highway  
Of dust.  
To casual ears  
The uninterpreted flood of his braying  
Sounds weird and ridiculous;  
When interpreted, it sounds  
Only ridiculous.  
I met one long-eared professorial  
Brayer, once,  
Who, wandering abroad,  
Brayed this,—  
That if the great barbed steed  
Of War  
Should come thundering down that roadway,  
'Twould be wise and humanitarian  
Policy  
For one to lie pliant in the dust  
And calmly let himself be  
Hoofed over.

Yesterday I heard another—

Thus :

“Cræsus, even he who owns all this  
Fine meadowland and all the  
Sweet-water springs

Thereon,—

Cræsus, I say,

Is a man of much vaster

Genius,

Of more superior present and

Ultimate worth,

Than yon idle Thespian barnstormer,  
Sophocles.”

Aghast, I harkened.

Then, over the fence-top,

Caressing a gray hirsute muzzle,

I asked :

“In reference to our friend Balaam, there,  
Is that the natural condition  
Of the beast?”

“Neigh,” returned my new acquaintance,  
Thrusting familiarly

His cool and bristly nose down my  
Shirt-bosom,

“He has eaten rather too much clover to-day ;  
Regard him not.”

And, indeed,

When that professorial brayer saw  
That I regarded him not,

He very shortly

Quit braying.



## THE GREAT EDITOR

A Great Editor!  
All editors, of course,  
Are great,  
But this Editor  
Was Greater.  
His greatness, while innate,  
Was due chiefly to sedulous development  
Of that keen, acute, newspaper  
Instinct,—  
That subtle, infallible, marvelous  
Sense,—  
Which prompted him to recognize  
A piece of news,  
As news,  
After it had appeared in first editions  
Of contemporaries,  
And to expedite the formal presentation  
Of same,  
Under big brazen capitals,  
In his own  
Subsequent  
Issues.  
But this Great Editor  
Developed two fatal manias;  
The which, in good  
Time,

Led to his being  
Thrown down.  
He displayed an ingenious fondness  
For enthralling chairs, tables, desks,  
And human furniture  
Within carmine-red circuits  
Of tape.  
Moreover, he posted an appendix  
To the Ten  
Commandments;  
Laying down certain conditions, under which  
His subdued and malleable  
Hirelings  
Might still be allowed  
The sweet halcyonian privilege of existing  
On earth.  
To the naturally playful  
Office cat  
Gave he the squelch effectual,  
In shooting her groundward through  
An pneumatic  
Tube.  
In brief,  
To drop our fine frenzy  
Of involved  
Thoughts,  
But to guide, nathless,  
The rapt molten fusion of same  
Into a common-day mould  
American,  
He was a rigid, stiff-necked  
Disciplinarian,

An unpardoning  
Formalist,  
Clenching the inaccessibility  
Of his proud standpoint  
In life  
With Scriptural joints of quotation,  
Such as :  
"Be ye therefore perfect,"—  
"My thoughts are not your thoughts,"—  
"Rejoice with trembling,"—  
*Et cetera.*  
His other fatal mania  
Was the mania for decapitating.  
Robespierre was his divine  
Model  
Of heroism.  
When he could find no  
Pale-browed timorous reporter  
To lop off,  
Stealthily he'd toe down lonesome hallways  
To conduct the immediate impromptu  
Guillotining  
Of some unmercurial  
Copy-boy.  
However, before all material  
Was exhausted,  
The proprietor came to light  
And gently suggested  
That the Great Editor  
Decapitate  
Himself.  
Swiftly the difficult feat

He accomplished,  
With deft, automatic nonchalance  
Of experience.  
Happily,  
The seed of his broad diversity  
Of talent  
Fell not on waste ground.  
Indeed,  
His clean Roman features  
Suffered no commentatorial  
Eclipse,  
Being seen but lately  
In the healthy burgh of  
Medicine Hat,  
Where, 'tis reported,  
He captured immense critical-eyed  
Audiences,  
By the manifest relish  
And unction  
With which (as Marks, No. 2)  
He wound, unwound, wound,  
Unwound, wound,  
Long reaches of encompassing  
Carmine-red  
Tape,  
In a gigantic, renovated, double-barreled  
Production  
Of  
"Uncle Tom's  
Cabin."

## DR. DECETUS

This is how it happened :  
Two rival cliques of  
Healthy and determined  
Bacilli  
Of the tribe  
Rhinoscleromatis  
Met in a narrow, clotted-up  
Artery,  
And,  
Neither faction giving right of way,  
A free-for-all fight  
Followed.  
That same night  
The fragmentary remains  
Of all combatants  
Were carried swiftly away  
On long clean rivers  
Of blood.

But ere the occurrence of this  
Subterranean tragedy,  
The owner of aforesaid  
Artery  
Had withdrawn his own dear little account  
From the bank,  
In order that that of  
Dr. T. I. Phoid

Be augmented and enlarged.  
He had also mortgaged his  
House and lot,  
That the material welfare of  
Dr. Tuber's family of growing children  
Be made secure.  
Now, for several months,  
He had adjusted his business solely  
To the modest requirements  
Of Dr. Decetus ;  
Receiving in return for  
Said adjustment  
Various costly distillations  
Of sassafras  
And medicinal unboiled  
Lake-water,—  
Not to mention scrips bearing  
Awe-compelling Latinity  
Of phrase,  
Arabian numerals,  
And a mysterious embellishing  
Of quaint serpentine  
Hieroglyphics.

But—  
A. Penn Decetus, M. D.  
Is now the *only*  
Physician  
In town.  
All others are but crude  
Horse-doctors.  
If your rating in

*Bradstreet's*

Pleases the eye of his imperious  
And discriminating  
Fancy,  
Even you, gentle stranger,  
May venture into the Æsculapian  
Presence,  
Or await your turn,  
Fearfully,  
At his office.



## A POPULAR AUTHOR

Hearing that my dear old  
Journalistic friend and whilom side partner,  
Penn Holder,  
Had become that vaunted phenomenon  
Known as  
A Popular Author,  
I concluded to bear him my condolence  
In person,  
And ascended to his airy office  
On the twenty-seventh floor of the  
Icarian Temple.  
The poor man was hammering wildly  
At his reverberating  
Type-writer,  
But recognized me at once  
And waved me politely  
To a chair.  
"In good time," quoth he;  
"I have just reached Chapter  
XXVIII, which is the point where  
My plots jog on good-naturedly alone,  
Allowing me to devour the contents of my  
Tin lunch-box.  
I can now talk, eat, and work  
At one and the same  
Period."

Which said,  
Manipulating his machine  
With one hand,  
He secured a robust sandwich  
In the other  
And settled back for a quiet  
Little chat.

I sighed, regretfully.  
"I see," said I, "that it is  
Quite impossible  
For you to come out to my farm  
At Frog Hollow and  
Simply loaf  
For a month or two."  
He looked up with great startled eyes :  
"Tempter, avaunt !  
Within that dread fated time  
I shall have ceased to be—  
A Popular Author."  
"And is it really possible," I queried,  
"That you have fallen  
So low?"  
"Ay, friend, 'tis true.  
The first edition of my latest  
Historical romance,  
'The Snuff-Box of the King,'  
Comprising some 150,000  
Copies,  
(See advertisement)  
Was entirely bought up  
Before publication.  
'Twill be dramatized

Next week.  
And hark me further!  
I have this very morn engaged  
Five nimble-fingered and alert  
Students  
To tear all secrets from the  
Knavish dusty past  
And lay the reeking trophies  
At my feet.  
This month's 'Prattle' (didst see't?)  
Contained a ten-page interview  
With my toothless good old  
Irish nurse."  
Emotion o'ercame me.  
Softly I rose and left;  
Ev'n as that man of granite  
Attacked his machine again  
With both hands,  
Beginning  
Chapter XXX.

## AN ORIGINAL (?)

In the year 2002,  
Christian era,  
A native of Kansas made several  
Abortive attempts to be  
Original.  
He was the only adult in that state  
(At large)  
Whose name did not inkily girdle  
The earth.  
This fact alone made him  
Original, but  
He did not think so.  
Despairingly, he cried:  
"By the Celestial Sunflower!  
I wither."  
Then he summoned his powers for  
One last rally,  
And wrote to the Editor:—  
"I have, Dear Editor, no kick  
Coming.  
In the pursuit of Happiness, I  
Cut 'cross lots  
And headed off the jade  
By a considerable  
Margin.  
I'll O. K. everything and everybody

On earth.  
Though a member of the proud  
Alfalfa Trust, I  
Sometimes detect myself  
Despising wealth and  
Determining to give up business  
At eighty-three—or, four—or, five.  
Then, indeed, shall life be  
A rosy banquet;  
Then, shall the Christmas goose  
Swing low;  
Then, shall the lavish steward  
Furnish forth  
Skittles and beer.”

## THE EGOIST

Weary am I of philosophers  
Measuring the Lilliputian dimensions  
Of man  
And catechising sagely,—  
“What’s anything?—Nothing.”  
Fellows who argue that  
The whole proud race of humans  
Is of no more vital importance to the scheme  
Than a brief shooting star,  
Yet who never neglect to sign their  
Illustrious names  
To each new paralyzing damper  
For ambition.  
Why, when I stroll down the street  
And observe my brave world,—  
All the theatres, stores, clubs, restaurants,  
Lights, noises, events, color, bustle, movement;  
See haply through plate-glass my millionaire slaves,  
My sturdy club-wielding Hercules on corner;  
All, and everyone, conspiring for the welfare and peace  
Of ME,—  
Puffs easily my chest with pride,  
And, pompous, I ascend the steps of my  
Automobile;  
Proffering an obsequious vassal a nickel,  
From pure lordly impulse  
And elvish whimsicality of spirit,  
As we jaunt gaily  
Along.

## YE CURIOUS ONES

I have shelved as absurd fallacy  
Of youth,  
As veriest moondrift of error,  
The idea that this our world is globular  
In shape.  
Nay, is it not humped plainly  
A mass interrogative?  
And does it not busy ever among  
The regardless, quiring stars,  
Asking questions?

For of us what creature,  
On the most cautious of days,  
Can avoid the gantlet and spear-throwers?  
Do not the myriad prying, nipping little shafts  
Glance from door, window, street, corridor, conveyance,  
Everywhere?  
What man of the polite town  
Can change the color of his neckgear  
From brilliant flamingo red to a peacock green  
Without a hundred eyes flashing their  
Interrogation?  
Can a man of the countryside  
Trundle modestly adown the rutted road  
A new-bought wheelbarrow  
And not a dozen tongues inquire



(More or less pertinently)  
The price?  
What person riding the stresses of life alone,  
Rafted frailly on narrow float  
Of bread and cheese,  
Is not asked to explain manifold reasons  
For not taking a partner on board  
And steering blithely for the uncharted matrimonious  
Seas?  
Who may—

But I have shelved forever  
That most absurd error of mine,  
That this our world is spherical  
In shape.  
Hereafter, it shall continue to revolve,  
In my mind's eye,  
As a hump-backed mass interrogative,  
Busying grotesquely among  
The beautiful regardless stars,  
Asking questions.

## LITERATURE

When hurtling through a vast buzzing  
Department store,  
It occasionally chances that, having had  
My teeth filled,  
My eyes examined,  
My photograph taken,  
My correct weight (for one cent) ascertained,  
And circling with elastic arm various edibles,  
Mayhap, I pause a moment in the  
Department of Literature.  
Lo, mine eyes are gladdened and refreshed by  
Wonderful indications of the advanced state  
Of the world's erudition.  
Giant pyramids and towers of authors,  
Dead and alive,  
(Many living dead authors, but more dead living ones)  
Rear ceilingward, like stacked salmon.  
What bargains!  
Here (cheapest of all) I see  
"Our Poets; only 9 cents Each, or  
Three for a Quarter."  
The austere Milton is being brushed aside  
By a lithe bright-eyed damsel,  
Who is manifestly searching for  
"Little Goldie's Lovers."  
Yon stern-jawed determined virgin

(No doubt questing a cook-book)  
Is perusing with outraged cast of countenance  
A divine page of Browning's  
"Sordello."  
In the next corner one may obtain  
Complete works of immortal novelists  
For \$1.99.  
Surveying the æsthetic scene,  
A wild desire to become immortal, too,  
Stirs ambitiously my breast.  
Could not I also create beautiful heroic characters,  
Write about fame, love, and the stars,  
And (discopyrighted)  
Be fervently pawed over  
Some fifty years hence?  
Vain dream!  
Illusive castle of cloud!  
With a low guffaw of mingled despair  
And cynical bitterness,  
I turn away;  
Purchasing, at the most frivolous counter,  
"A Ton of Fun; or, Two Thousand Square Laughs,"—  
For desperate and hasty means of elevating  
My complete depression of spirits,  
As I ride homeward  
In the car.

## AN UNFORTUNATE

It appeared that the pimply young man  
On the other end of the  
Park bench  
Was having a perverse run  
Of luck.  
“Friend,” he began, sliding easily into  
The sanguine benevolence of my look,  
“What’s the fare to St. Louis?  
Having vainly supplicated work  
In hard and mercenary cities  
Of seven states,  
Lo, I am now pressing,—  
Weary, footsore, disillusioned,—  
To that the happy town  
Of my nativity.  
Nevertheless, scorn I degrading alms  
Of the charitable.  
Behold this beautiful gold watch,  
For the which, in careless days of flushiness,  
I expended the gross of sixty-three  
Dollars.  
I shall now sacrifice to you the same  
For a paltry fiver,  
Throwing in, gratis, chain and charm.”  
Thereupon he drew from his red-dotted  
Green vest

A great, glittering, brass-dropping  
Timepiece.

"O, my poor young fellow!"

I exclaimed,

"You have been most monstrously  
Beguiled.

Those watches are selling,

Even now, at Ropem, Inn & Co.'s  
Colossal store,

At only \$3.67½ per dozen,—

To say nothing of a reasonable discount  
For cash."

As wearily the unfortunate young man  
Moved off,

I could not help musing:

"How calamitous!

So far away from his snug

And happy home

In St. Louis,

With no personal property

To quote

But a green red-dotted vest

And a great, massy, gilt-dripping

Gold watch

Of a purely nominal

Value."

## 'RASTUS JEFFERSON JONES

Down in Georgia,  
I saw a dusky descendant of Ham  
Gathering peaches,  
Supplemented by some nine or ten tattered  
Pickaninnies.

I said :

“ 'Rastus Jefferson Jones,  
What's your philosophy of life?  
What think ye that the mystical, the golden  
Future  
Will body aptly forth  
In moral, mental, and financial  
Betterment  
Of the sun-loved race  
Ethiopian?”

He said :

“My 'los'fee, massa!  
Ef I done git mo' chillens,  
Den I kin pic'  
Mo' peaches.”

## COURTESIES

Through the fair heart of Michigan  
Serenely walking,  
Lo, reared there a dusty, infamous,  
Wayside philosopher  
Huge in my path.  
I said: "How far to Kalamazoo?"  
He said: "Have you got a match?"  
When he had appropriated,  
For his own present  
And future  
Exigencies,  
Some three-quarters  
Of my sulphurous property,  
And lit an antique, well-blackened  
Corn-cob  
Pipe,  
Leisurely vouchsafed he  
To enter the antechamber of my interrogation,  
And,  
Issuing thence,  
Indulged in a critical, galloping  
Comment  
On society, politics, life,  
Human nature,  
And affairs in



General.  
So I,  
Tramping onward,  
Found there were several things  
To think about  
Besides the scenery.  
Soon it befell,  
On the road's gentle slope,  
A youth,  
Gaily-appareled,  
From a bicycle hailed me :  
"Sir, a thousand pardons,  
But—  
Have you a match?"  
A cigarette, fragrant and Turkish,  
Lighted he ;  
Profuse of thanks,  
Wheeled he away.  
But I,  
Tramping townward,  
Began to feel very much  
Like  
An empty, embossed, hastily-shut-down  
Match-safe.

## POETS

I saw a great swarming  
Of fretful little pale-featured men,  
Playing fretful little tunes  
On little harps of  
One string,  
Beneath a fair mist-wreathen hill.  
It was quite amusing to see  
The intensely serious  
Aspect  
Of each fretful little harp-player,  
As he hung amorous over his own  
Fretful little tune,—  
Commissioning the while one sly eye  
For sidelong surveillance  
On his neighbor.  
When any of all that pallid swarming  
Attempted to ascend the fair  
Mist-wreathen hill,  
They were immediately dragged back  
By near comrades.  
Drawing closer,  
I saw how one pale player,  
Stealthily ambitious,  
Was endeavoring to fasten an  
Extra string  
In his tiny little

Instrument.

He was soon discovered,  
Set upon fiercely,  
Thrown down,  
Beaten.

A sturdy passing wood-cutter  
Also noted this last happening,  
With quiet, amused  
Eyes.

To him I said:

"Who be these pitiful, pale-featured,  
Fretful little

People?

And what are they

Up to?"

Shrugged he, laconic:

"Poets!"

## PEOPLES OF REFINEMENT

Reared in a godly country  
Where people of refinement  
And education  
Punctiliously turn  
To the right,  
The man in homespun  
Encountered with a natural suffusing irritation  
The man in the bearskin coat,  
Who persistently, doggedly, ostentatiously,  
Turned to his left.  
One day a heavily-loaded cane  
Adjusted the swing of its parabola  
To the angle  
Of a gross barbaric  
Head.

Cheerfully condoning fine and costs,  
The sensibility of our hero in homespun  
Received its first real  
Jolt.  
For so it appeared,—  
That this man in bearskin  
Hailed from a godly country  
Where people of refinement  
And education  
Punctiliously turn  
To the left.

## THE MOON

When I sauntered into the  
Village square  
It was a fine moonlit night,  
And all seats, save one,  
Were occupied.

I said: "How complete a moon! how lovely!"

One cried: "You see only one side."

These, also: "'Tis but sunshine reflected."

"Not inhabited—no water."

"Distance from earth, 238,650 miles."

"Changes her phases monthly."

"An opaque spheroid."

I said: "How complete—how lovely!"

One insisted: "You see but one side."

These, also: "Just sunshine reflected."

"Not inhabited—no water."

"Distance, 238,650 miles."

"Changes monthly."

"A spheroid opaque."

It was a fine moonlit night when I  
Sauntered out of the  
Village square,  
And all seats were occupied,  
Save one.

## A LOST BET

As I awaited the street-car,  
Two flush-faced women sailed into  
Sight,  
Vociferously loquacious.  
Sponsoring the active, right hemisphere  
Of my brain,  
I proposed a little bet with the dormant  
Unworked left one,  
Saying:  
"Ten to one, partner,  
That these too-eager, flush-faced women  
Are discussing  
Some new article of attire,—  
Shape, set, color, style,—  
Or else  
'Tis all about 'him'."  
Alas!  
My gray mental coinage  
Was placed to the bad.  
The sweet and charitable duennas  
Were simply at the old, old, commonplace  
Amusement  
Of snipping, clipping, ripping  
Another woman's sole reputation  
Up the back.

## MENTAL DYSPEPSIA

A well-groomed imaginative youth  
Was affecting the cynical blasé world-weariedness  
Of expression,  
Nigh me on the train.  
Clever he was and adept;  
Some of his wisdom was as old as  
The scholarly and revered Book  
Of Kagemna.  
Even the volatile tongue of his  
Young lady friend  
Was locked by the key of wonder.  
His faults were duly aired with charming naïvete,  
With candor superb.  
"You already know what a boor I am,"  
He said,  
"In social life,—  
How, irremediably, I've insulted or estranged,  
By word, by act, by demeanor,  
Acquaintances, comrades, pseudo- and  
Quasi-, friends;  
But you had ought to glimpse me during  
Office hours:  
Then am I a supreme beast,  
Worthy of wearing horns.  
You should see with what mute Caligulean cruelty  
I turn people down.



The concentrated glare of my left orb  
Is truly basilisk-dire  
In effect.  
Yet oft in my softer hours  
Morosely I muse o'er my stubborn unamiable heart  
And query myself  
'Am I capable of loving?'  
Alas! I would love, but I cannot.  
To cap all," he concluded,  
"I am perfectly aware of my own  
Dire malady—  
'Tis mental dyspepsia."

So spoke this world-weary, well-groomed youth  
To his young lady friend  
On the train:  
But that same night, when I strolled into  
The "Cider Jug,"—  
To encompass my habitual Welsh rabbit  
And read the postings of the  
O'Dullivan-McLoy fistic combat,  
Then being pulled off at  
Coney Island,—  
Did I not see the ferocious, adamantine  
Caligula  
Centering gaily a group of worldlings,  
The soul, life, enthusiasm, joy,  
Of that whole unmoralizing  
Assembly?

## MY NEIGHBOR

When I grow tired of seeing myself  
About the house,  
I often cut across meadows  
And pay a social visit  
To my neighbor.  
She is a dear motherly creature,  
This neighbor of mine,  
And is so well remote from the foibles  
And the frivolities  
Of youth  
That her mere quiet presence  
Soothes like a white mantle of dream  
My perturbed spirit.  
Gazing on her serene and meditative face,  
And the dark kindly eyes,  
Through speechless and reverential minutes,  
The gentle passivity of her nature  
Envelops me entire.  
At such moment, I sweepingly ask,  
What heart of human  
Can feel clearer foretaste than mine  
Of the boasted peace of  
Nirvana?  
'Tis always with increased respect  
That I bid my neighbor  
A cheery good-bye,—

Leaving her calmly chewing her cud,  
And swishing the flies from her beautiful  
Black and white hide  
With easy mechanical  
Swish.

## DOUBLE LIFE

A worthy and honored member  
Of society,  
At the sedate age of fifty-three,  
Was shocked to observe  
That he had not been living a  
Double life.

"But is it not yet possible,"  
He reflected,  
"For me to retrieve this my present  
Disgraceful and anomalous  
Position?"

That night he craftily procured  
Slouch, mask, sand-bag,  
Downed a lonely and ruminating  
Pedestrian,  
And made good his escape with the  
Following booty:—  
Currency, 87 cents;  
One nickel-plated watch,  
One Alaska-diamond scarfpin,  
One pearl-handled penknife (blades broken),  
One meal ticket (half punched)  
Good on the justly-famous and popular  
"Golden Drip Restaurant."

It was next morning,  
While carelessly glancing over a

Check for \$565,000,  
Representative of his  
Monthly dividend  
As president of the great world-embracing  
Hook-and-Eye Trust,  
That this worthy and honored member  
Of society  
Collided with a thought :  
"Heavens! what labor requisite  
For the evolution and fattening of my slender  
Newly-created shadow-half  
Into anything like proportionate  
Greatness!"  
So reluctantly he abandoned  
His infant self  
On the lowest doorstep of his ambition :  
But bore from that ignoble day  
An indelible impression of secret sorrow  
And discouragement  
That was heart-harrowing  
To behold.

## THE SICK LION

A concourse of sagacious people,  
During their yearly visit to the great  
Zoo,  
Noted, with astonishment, that  
The big African lion  
Repaid not their glances of admiration  
At compound interest,  
But looked vacantly, dreamingly, reminiscently,  
Far over their prying heads,  
At blank opposite wall.  
So wisely among themselves  
Whispered they,  
Saying,—  
“’Tis a sick lion;  
Poor lion!  
What he needs is society.”  
Soon the surrounded and protesting  
Keeper  
Was compelled to drag that cage  
Next to the cage of the  
“Happy Family,”—  
Which family consisted of  
Unspiritual hard-featured hyenas,  
Cunning intellectual foxes,  
Gruff domineering bears,  
Prattling tell-tale parrots,

Beautiful conceited peacocks,  
And lecherous fun-loving monkeys.  
Then saw those sagacious people,  
Indeed,  
That 'twas a sick lion;  
For,  
With bitter shake of mane,  
The mighty monarch of jungles  
Gave one last long ineffable roar,  
Fell onto his golden tawny back,  
And immediately  
Expired.



### THREE AIR-SHIPS

Three men of dogma,  
Though differing in very many  
Essential points,  
Centered harmoniously in this,—  
That the best way to reach the devil-ridden  
Ears  
Of the vulgar  
Was by way of speaking-trumpets and  
Aerostation.

So each man constructed,  
Privately,  
His own frame of longitudinal bamboos,  
Whalebone, or steel,  
Envelopes, light but strong,  
And stanch gas-bags,—  
Giving much feverish attention to  
Buoyance, shape, level, power,  
But, above all, to  
Stability,  
Which is the ecliptic  
On which all other requisites  
Are strung.

Thus came it to pass,  
That,

On the day of the Great Fair,  
Three proud ships,  
Anchored carefully to base earth  
By tapering chains  
Of known weight,  
Was the magnet supreme  
For a fickle, untutored, alive  
Populace.

Exultingly,  
Each dogmatician was making clear  
The infallibility and truth of his  
Special doctrine,  
With delicate aid of the  
Graphophone,  
When a fat burgher swelled amply his chest,  
And shouted:  
"Twenty thousand marks—  
To that man  
Who can clear fifty miles  
First!"

While three excited air-ships were coursing  
Down the faint pale-blue  
Sky-line,  
This same fat burgher  
Unrolled a mysterious many-colored  
Chart,  
And proceeded to give reasons  
Why the assembled Trojans  
Should most completely and unhesitatingly  
Endorse  
His own private little  
Scheme.

## I'S

I's, I's, I's!

Self-flattering, clattering, chattering  
I's!

I's, I's, I's!

I's, I's, I's!

Everywhere, I's,—

No escape!

Pour they shrieking from window,  
Shout they from street unto housetop,  
Sit they on ridges of churches,  
Cling they to steeples.

I's, I's, I's!

I's, I's, I's!

The pained winds clap hands to ears,

But they creep through the fingers—

Persistent I's, conceited I's, ignorant I's,

Small, cowardly, hypocritical, commonplace i's,

Big blustering Roman I's,

Empty-headed, ornamented, full-dressed I's,

Bookish I's,

(Do not whole symposiums wrangle herein?)

Religious I's, pagan I's, judicial I's, criminal I's,—

I's, I's, I's!

I's, I's, I's!

Buddha's blest sea, can it contain them all?

Jehovah's high heaven, can it receive them all?

I's, I's, I's!

Alas,

God help them!

## A QUESTION

Pulpiter !  
You who expound so vehemently  
The most delicate whys and wherefores  
Of  
Sin, salvation, life, death, and after-death,  
And familiarly tongue  
"Heaven" and "hell,"  
Explain me but this :—  
Where go the nonentities,  
The cowards,  
The great pallid bulk,  
The boneless souls, the lack-hearts,  
Encompassers nor of good nor of evil,—  
Where go they ?  
The great pallid bulk,  
The boneless ones,  
Nonentities,  
Cowards !

## ARTISTRY

As I came down the valley,  
Fell marble-dust loosely  
Around me.  
I saw the blue-bloused men  
Chiseling figures of grace  
And of beauty  
Free from the rude ponderous blocks.  
Delighted, I watched them.  
Then nestling my ear on one bosom  
That ravished completely  
My vision,  
I listened for heart-beats.  
Unanswered, I leaned to another,  
Waiting for heart-beats.  
Then desperately sought I another,  
Another, another.  
"Fool!" shouted near chiselers,  
Hatefully glaring;  
"Gross, commonplace fool,  
Bending for heart-beats—  
Get thee, thou inane one,  
Insufferable dinosaur,  
From our Valley of Art!"

## THE STRANGE HAND

When I had attained the  
Interesting age  
Of seven,  
Astonished I was and dumbfounded,  
Awakening sudden,  
To find a small strange hand  
Resting beside me  
On pillow.

"Whose hand was this?"

And

"Where had it come from?"

These natural questions  
Fought slow in the mist  
Of my juvenility.

The mere gross fact  
That this hand of mystery  
Was securely attached  
To my own  
Wrist

Made little or no difference.

But,

Ever from that day,  
Earnestly, carelessly, thoughtfully, foolishly,  
Still have I searched;  
In probable places, in improbable places,

Still have I searched—  
Searched for the true owner of that  
Mysterious hand.  
Vain!  
Not in church, theatre, market-place,  
In the libraries of the theologians,  
In the schools of the philosophers,  
In observatories of the astronomers,  
On the tables of the anatomists,  
In laboratories of the chemists,  
In the sweet green singing groves of the poets,  
In crowd of the surging agora,  
In town or afield,  
Have I succeeded in finding  
The true owner  
Of that  
Mysterious hand.

So now,  
Though I have not quite abandoned  
The search,  
I have concluded to rest awhile;  
Keeping, however,  
This strange piece of property  
Hard at work  
As my  
Amanuensis.



## IN THE HALL OF IDEALS


I unlocked the door;  
I entered my Hall of Ideals.  
The rusts and the dusts,  
Clouding, nigh choked me;  
But my lamp  
Soon from a niche was dim-shining.  
Ruin and ruin!  
Not one statue of all  
Left on pedestal standing—  
Prone all, broken all, shattered.  
I said: "It is well;  
Let them lie prone in dust:  
It is well, O illusions!  
I live far beyond you."  
But even while speaking,  
Came sadly, slowly, the thought:  
"Is not the illusion of disillusion  
An illusion more false  
Than even these false-fair illusions;  
These, through all falseness, gave beauty;  
That, wraps but in darkness  
Life and itself."

Then tried I to rear  
One stone-heavy statue,  
But could not;

Then brushed I the faces,  
And wearily studied each feature—  
Dust-doomed forever.  
At last,  
I lifted my lamp from the niche  
And clanged close the door;  
Carrying, light in my arm,  
Only a pale little bust—  
'Twas one of the heavenly Muses—  
Away.

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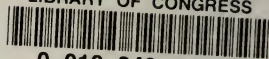
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